



Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Cultural Heritage Reporting: A CDS Perspective

Weina Li, Songcheng Tang

Department of English Studies, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China

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Abstract— As an important field for cross-cultural communication, the discourse construction of cultural heritage news reporting plays a not inconsiderable role in reflecting the value orientation and cultural concepts of different civilizations. The present study aims to conduct a comparative study of Chinese and Western cultural heritage reporting by exploring the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western media in terms of thematic content, discourse subjects and communication purposes, based on the framework of cultural discourse studies, while also analyzing the underlying cultural and historical factors as well as their engagement in international communication. The study adopts a quantitative and qualitative combined method, and data are collected from the heritage-related news reports in such influential media as *China Daily*, *The New York Times*, and the British Broadcasting Corporation during a time span from 2020 to 2025. Results show that while both Chinese and western media pay attention to the sustainable development of cultural heritage, Chinese media tend to combine cultural heritage with national identity, traditional festivals and tourism development, emphasizing cultural continuity and national pride, and the communication strategy is dominated by official narrative; on the other hand, western media pay more attention to the global sharing, modern application, and market value of cultural heritage, and their communication strategies highlight diversified narratives and individual experiences. Those similarities and differences in discourse construction patterns are deeply influenced by their respective cultural and historical backgrounds. The study offers some insights for the different discourse patterns between Chinese and Western media in cultural heritage reporting, providing new theoretical support and practical inspiration for the international communication of cultural heritage.

Keywords— cultural heritage, Cultural Discourse Studies, news reports, international communication



I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage, as a significant carrier of human civilization, embodies the historical memory, cultural values, and social identity of different nations. According to UNESCO (2025), cultural heritage includes tangible heritage (such as architecture, historical sites and cultural relics) and intangible heritage (such as languages, folk customs, craftsmanship and festivals). Those forms of heritage not only represent the historical accumulation of a nation, but also exert a profound influence on contemporary cultural development, national identity construction, and international cultural exchange.

With the deepening of globalization, the protection, utilization and communication of cultural heritage have

become a focal point of international concern. Many countries have reinforced the protection of their cultural heritage through legislation, policy support and international cooperation. As a key channel of cultural communication, media play an indispensable role in that process. In recent years, media reporting of cultural heritage has increased significantly. However, considerable differences exist in discourse selection, communication strategies and value orientations across countries. Against that backdrop, the present study employs the theoretical framework of Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS), as proposed by Shi, to conduct a comparative analysis of Chinese and western media reporting of cultural heritage. By integrating qualitative

and quantitative approaches, the study aims to explore how cultural heritage is discursively constructed in Chinese and western news reporting.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in the innovative application of CDS, a theory rooted in the Chinese cultural context and originally designed for analyzing political discourse and cultural policy. By applying CDS to a comparative study of Chinese and western media, and by analyzing high-frequency words from the self-constructed corpora, the study could reveal the similarities and differences in discourse construction within cultural heritage reporting, thereby verifying the applicability of CDS in cross-cultural studies. Existing research on cultural heritage has largely focused on policy making, tourism management, and cultural identity construction. This study, by incorporating discourse analysis, would shed light on how media construct the meanings of cultural heritage through news narratives, offering a new academic perspective to the field.

From a practical standpoint, the present study utilizes five dimensions of CDS as the analytical framework to uncover the discursive strategies employed by Chinese and western media in cultural heritage reporting, thereby enhancing our understanding of international communication strategies, especially western strategies in heritage reporting. By analyzing such patterns, the study would offer valuable implications for developing China's own distinctive discourse system and fostering mutual understanding across cultures. In addition, it provides practical insights for the broader field of cultural communication and promotes intercultural dialogue in the realm of heritage preservation, ultimately contributing to the global communication of cultural diversity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on cultural heritage both in China and abroad has primarily focused on the following three dimensions: value construction, communication and media mechanisms, as well as discourse strategies.

As for international studies, in terms of value construction, Smith (2016) proposed the concept of the "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (AHD), arguing that cultural heritage is not an objective entity, but rather a cultural expression constructed within specific political and social contexts. That theory emphasizes that the perceived value of heritage stems from power-embedded discursive authorization, offering important insights into how media contribute to meaning-making in heritage communication. Waterton and Smith (2009), through research on community heritage projects, found that official discourse often marginalizes local voices, resulting

in what they term as "misrecognition" in identity formation. Their findings underscore the need to prioritize diversity and localized expression in heritage communication. Winter (2014) explored the role of cultural heritage in the reconfiguration of global power, proposing that heritage is not only a repository of historical memory, but also a strategic resource in cultural competition—thus providing a perspective on its role in international communication.

In regard to communication and media mechanisms, Geismar (2018) examined how cultural heritage is communicated through museums and digital databases in the digital age. The study highlights the increased mobility and participatory potential of heritage facilitated by digital media, providing methodological guidance for analyzing heritage communication on digital platforms. Su and Xiao (2021), using "world heritage" as a case study, discussed the pathways of world heritage communication within multi-level governance structures (national, local, and international), pointing out the inherent tension between heritage definitions and the distribution of communicative authority. Their study suggests that heritage communication is not a neutral process, but one characterized by ongoing negotiation and redefinition. Alkymakchy et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of integrating urban contexts in the digital preservation of heritage, contributing to the development of place-based communication strategies.

In terms of discourse strategies, Vasavada and Kour (2016) examined how Indian cultural heritage is represented in tourism advertisements, noting an increasing tendency toward symbolization and commercialization of cultural discourse. Their findings point to a shift in the functional orientation of heritage narratives. Su and Xiao (2021) also observed that mainstream media are increasingly incorporating the voices of community practitioners and representatives of marginalized cultures, which makes heritage communication more participatory and public-oriented. Those developments serve as a useful benchmark providing a basis for comparing the discursive approaches of Chinese and western media. Overall, the studies of the three dimensions reviewed above demonstrate that international scholars are increasingly incorporating such themes as subject plurality and digital technologies into their analytical frameworks, thereby offering theoretical and methodological foundations for the present study of the investigation into discourse strategies in Chinese and western media heritage reporting.

In China, relevant studies in recent years can also be analyzed across three dimensions. Regarding value

construction, Yang (2018) argued that the establishment and communication of heritage are carried out under the guidance of national ideology, with the primary function of serving national cultural identity and mainstream values, which highlights that Chinese cultural heritage discourse possesses distinct political and institutional characteristics, providing a pathway for analyzing how media align with national narratives. Yang (2002) from the perspective of cultural sovereignty, emphasized the importance of strengthening local cultural self-expression in the context of global communication—an insight particularly relevant to understanding how Chinese cultural identity is presented in international discourse.

In terms of communication and media mechanisms, Hu (2016) through a case study on the digital presentation of ancient villages, found that technological tools not only alter the modes of intangible heritage communication, but also reshape its content, reminding us that digital media actively participate in cultural reconstruction. Cao (2015) by analyzing cases from Yunnan Province, observed that the integration of culture and tourism transforms both the function and effectiveness of heritage communication, offering a practical paradigm for diversified pathways. Tong (2017) studied official government communication and concluded that “official voices” still dominate new media platforms, reflecting the prevailing role of the state in China’s cultural heritage communication. From a policy perspective, Liu (2019) proposed the concept of “precise communication”, emphasizing the need to emphasize content orientation and audience targeting in heritage communication—a notion that provides valuable guidance for media agenda-setting.

As for discourse strategies, Jiang (2022) in a study based on a parallel Chinese-English corpus of intangible cultural heritage, pointed out that the translation of culturally loaded terms involves cultural adaptation and discursive reconstruction, which highlights that communication is not merely linguistic transference, but also a strategic choice of cultural positioning. Hu (2023), through a case study of “Nüshu” (women’s script), analyzed the interaction between official and grassroots discourse on new media platforms. His findings suggest an emerging trend toward negotiated expression, offering a practical reference for understanding the pluralistic structure of heritage discourse in contemporary China.

All the studies above indicate a growing scholarly awareness in China of the mechanisms, platforms and national narratives involved in heritage communication, along with a gradual expansion into structural discourse analysis. However, most of the research remain focused on practical and policy dimensions, with relatively few

studies offering cross-cultural comparisons of media discursive strategies. Notably, Wang and Ren (2023) pioneered the application of Shi’s Cultural Discourse Studies framework (Shi, 2010) in the field of intangible heritage communication, combining CDS with corpus linguistics to analyze the international news reports from 17 countries in ten years. Building upon their work, the present study addresses the issue of contextual heterogeneity in cross-national media environments by constructing a unified English-language corpus and expanding the scope to include the full spectrum of cultural heritage. Thus it will further deepen the comparative analysis of Chinese and western mainstream media’s discourse strategies in news reporting on cultural heritage.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS) framework proposed by Shi Xu is primarily concerned with the construction, communication and recognition of cultural discourses, focusing on how culture functions within social interactions and power relations. Drawing upon theoretical traditions such as Critical Discourse Analysis and Cultural Studies, CDS points out that discourse is not merely “a reflection of social reality” (Hall, 1997), but a formative force that actively shapes it (Shi, 2010). According to Shi, discourse refers to “specific social events or recurring social practices involving the use of language and other semiotic resources (such as gestures and symbols) within particular historical and cultural contexts” (Shi, 2013). In that sense, cultural discourse is more than a linguistic form—it constitutes a mode of social practice that shapes group identity, social order and power structures (Shi, 2018). The CDS framework emphasizes the dynamic evolution of cultural discourses under the influence of historical, political and economic factors. It also investigates how discourses are produced, received and reproduced across different cultural fields. Specifically, the framework outlines six core analytical elements: **subjects of speech, content/form/social relations, mediation, purpose/effects, cultural relations, and historical relations**.

Among those elements, mediation highlights how different forms of media shape the production and communication of discourse. In this study, all the three media selected—*China Daily*, *The New York Times*, and *the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*—are traditional mainstream news organizations, and the collected data consist solely of text-based news reports. Given the relative uniformity of media formats across the three outlets, there is limited variability in terms of

technical presentation or platform structure, rendering the dimension of mediation less analytically significant in the current context. Therefore, “mediation” is not included as a separate analytical dimension. To maintain a clear research focus and ensure comparability, the present study concentrates on the remaining five elements of CDS.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

1. Research questions

Guided by the framework of Cultural Discourse Studies, this study seeks to investigate the discursive strategies employed in Chinese and western media coverage of cultural heritage. It aims to answer the following research questions:

(1) Are there any similarities and differences between Chinese and western media in terms of the theme (content) ? What are they?

(2) Are there any similarities and differences in terms of the communication strategies (subject of discourse, purpose) ? What are they?

(3) What cultural and historical relationships are reflected in those similarities and differences? How is cultural heritage discursively constructed in Chinese and western media respectively?

2. Data collection

This study selects three representative media outlets—*China Daily*, *The New York Times*, and *the British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC)—as sources for comparative analysis. The rationale for the selection is as follows: *China Daily*, founded in 1994, is one of China’s largest English-language news portals and one of the country’s most influential official media platforms. *The New York Times* is a major American daily with a global readership and long-standing credibility. *The BBC*, which launched television services in 1936, is the world’s first

and one of the largest public broadcasting organizations. The present study will employ the latter two outlets as representative of Western mainstream media.

The sampling period spans from January 1, 2020 to January 1, 2025. News articles were retrieved using the keyword “cultural heritage”. The time span was selected due to its distinctiveness as a transitional period in the global context of cultural heritage, marked by the reports of multiple transformative forces—public crises, digital shift, and policy reforms. Firstly, the global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 marked a critical turning point in cultural heritage management, necessitating a rapid shift from traditional modes of protection to digital emergency mechanisms. Representative cases include China’s “Cloud Tour Dunhuang” virtual exhibition platform and the severe financial crisis triggered by the large-scale closure of European museums. In addition, that period witnessed the accelerated application of emerging digital technologies such as 3D scanning, AI-based restoration, and metaverse-based virtual heritage. For instance, the digital reconstruction of Notre-Dame Cathedral initiated in 2021 exemplified the growing integration of digital technologies into heritage protection. Moreover, that time span was characterized by significant policy innovations. Major events include that China’s “14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Relics Protection (2021–2025)” promoted the development of linear heritage networks, while UNESCO strengthened its policy framework for climate change response in 2022. In summary, those developments make the 2020–2025 period a critical window for observing paradigm shifts in the cultural heritage in the 21st century.

To ensure the reliability of the corpus, both manual and software-assisted screening were used to remove duplicate and irrelevant entries. The final number of valid news articles is shown in Figure 1, and the scale of the compiled corpus is presented in Table 1.

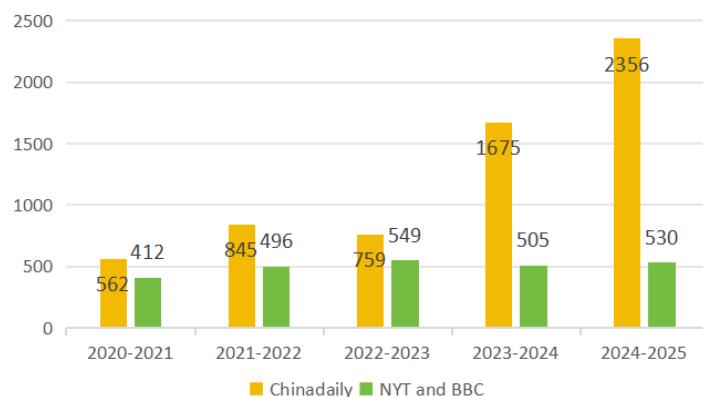


Fig.1: Number of cultural heritage news reports in Chinese and western media in the past five years

Table 1: Scale overview of cultural heritage reports in the three media in the last five years

YEAR	China Daily		New York Times		BBC	
	/	Token	Type	Token	Type	Token
2020-2021	65434	8884	156698	14708	87160	10660
2021-2022	61182	8457	167702	16085	153402	13059
2022-2023	58365	8320	160893	16058	130175	11416
2023-2024	79818	9849	162888	15533	156641	13497
2024-2025	49544	7757	148027	16598	151379	13581
Total	314,343	43,267	796,208	78982	678,757	62213

3. Research procedure

According to the aforementioned three research questions, the present study is conducted in four stages as follows:

Step 1: Corpus construction

As is shown in Figure 1, the number of cultural heritage news reports published by the three media outlets over the past five years varies considerably. To ensure the balanced representation, a stratified sampling method was adopted. For *China Daily*, 200 articles were randomly selected from each year, yielding a total of 1,000 articles to form the Chinese Heritage News Reporting Corpus (CHNC). For the western media, 100 articles were selected respectively from *The New York Times* and *the BBC* for each year, resulting in a combined total of 1,000 articles to form the Western Heritage News Reporting Corpus (WHNC). All initial texts were processed using WCopyfind 4.1.5 for duplication detection, followed by manual screening to remove irrelevant content such as non-news texts, images, symbols, advertisements and hyperlinks. Only the core news report texts were retained. The scale of the two corpora is presented in Table 2. Subsequently, corpus analysis software AntConc 4.3.1 was used to conduct the statistical and comparative analyses of the linguistic features in Chinese and western media reporting on cultural heritage.

Table 2: Scale overview of CHNC and WHNC

YEAR	CHNC	WHNC
2020-2021	65434	243858
2021-2022	61182	321104
2022-2023	58365	291068
2023-2024	79818	319529
2024-2025	49544	299406
Total of Token	314,343	147,496,5

Step 2: Analysis of thematic content

Using AntConc, the top 50 high-frequency words were extracted from both corpora to identify the dominant themes and focus contents in Chinese and western media reports of cultural heritage.

Step 3: Analysis of discourse strategies

To examine the discourse subjects, all occurrences of the verb “say” and its variants (said, says, saying) were retrieved from both corpora. That allowed for an initial assessment of the agents cited in cultural heritage reporting. To investigate communicative purposes, sentences containing adverbial clauses of purpose, specifically those using such connections as “in order to” and “so as to”, were extracted. By analyzing the types of subjects quoted and the communicative intentions expressed, this step reveals the underlying discursive strategies adopted by Chinese and western media.

Step 4: Analysis of cultural and historical relationship

Finally, the study examines the cultural and historical relations underlying the observed discourse differences. That includes both the internal factors related to the media institutions themselves and the external factors such as governmental influence and broader sociopolitical contexts. Through the process, the study aims to explain how and why Chinese and western media adopt the observed strategies in constructing their respective narratives about cultural heritage.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Theme of the report: National narratives vs. global values

According to the statistics conducted via AntConc 4.3.1, the top 50 high-frequency words in CHNC and WHNC were extracted and ranked, as is presented in Table 3. Those words could reflect the thematic tendencies of

Chinese and western media in reporting on cultural heritage.

Table 3: Top 50 frequent words in CHNC and WHNC

China Daily			NYT and BBC		
Rank	Freq	Type	Rank	Freq	Type
1	3077	Cultural/Culture	1	3465	People
2	3632	Chinese/China	2	3532	Cultural/Culture
3	1573	Heritage/-s	3	4208	Russian/Russia
4	869	People	4	3528	China/Chinese
5	835	Province/-cial	5	2078	Museum
6	794	City/-ies	6	2031	President
7	642	World	7	2023	Government
8	615	Development	8	3024	Country/-ies
9	613	Beijing	9	1896	World
10	612	Intangible	10	1853	National
11	606	National	11	1820	Video
12	672	Tradition/-al	12	1826	Heritage/-s
13	533	Tourism	13	1577	Art
14	525	Ancient	14	1513	Now
15	477	Museum	15	1479	Work
16	422	Art	16	1471	Region
17	412	Tea	17	1672	City/-ies
18	410	Local	18	1621	Minister/-s
19	563	History/-cial	19	1392	Rights
20	371	Time	20	1388	Time
21	653	Country/-ies	21	1379	Ukraine
22	341	Region	22	1360	Political
23	334	International	23	1355	Party
24	318	UNESCO	24	1336	International
25	378	Exhibition/-s	25	1327	Monitoring
26	294	Work	26	1326	Development
27	331	Village/-s	27	1324	War
28	293	River/-s	28	1271	Only
29	257	Ethnic	29	1232	Public
30	255	Festival	30	1501	Website/-s
31	254	According	31	1141	Body
32	242	Dynasty	32	1135	Foreign
33	493	Central/-ter/-s	33	1086	Media/-s
34	248	County/-ies	34	1024	Economic
35	372	Area/-s	35	1549	Central/-ter/-s
36	244	Visitor/-s	36	1011	Military

37	226	Public	37	1011	Ministry
38	225	Only	38	933	Company
39	222	High	39	1071	Meeting/-s
40	221	Director/-s	40	924	Local
41	303	Protect/-ion	41	900	United
42	213	Shanghai	42	901	Putin
43	212	Now	43	899	States
44	210	Government	44	897	Law
45	210	Held	45	884	Iran
46	209	Known	46	929	Support/-s
47	209	Relic/-s	47	1269	Group/-s
48	203	Long	48	867	Security
49	202	Different	49	1302	History/-cial
50	300	Project/-s	50	863	American

Based on the high-frequency words in CHNC, several main thematic categories can be identified (see Figure 2), including (1) Heritage Category, (2) Forms of Activity, (3)

Scope of Communication, (4) Subjects Communication, and (5)History of the Heritage.



Fig. 2: Topic category of top 50 high frequency words in CHNC

Those high-frequency words reveal not only the main contents and methods of cultural heritage communication in China, but also the thematic preferences of *China Daily* news reporting. For instance, in terms of heritage category, the tenth anniversary of the Grand Canal's inclusion in the World Heritage List received extensive reports. Other prominent examples include traditional “tea culture” and “museum”. In terms of activity forms, “festival” and “exhibition” are most commonly reported. Regarding spatial coverage, the reports span various provinces, with “Beijing” (as the cultural-political center) and “Shanghai” (as the economic-financial hub) playing prominent roles in

heritage communication. Communicative actors range from domestic and international government agencies to “tourists” and the general “public”, all of whom participate in cultural heritage promotion through policy advocacy and event organization. In addition, historically loaded words such as “ancient”, “history”, and “dynasty” underscore the emphasis on China’s long-standing legacy in civilization.

Similarly, the top 50 high-frequency words in WHNC can also be categorized into the following categories (see Figure 3).

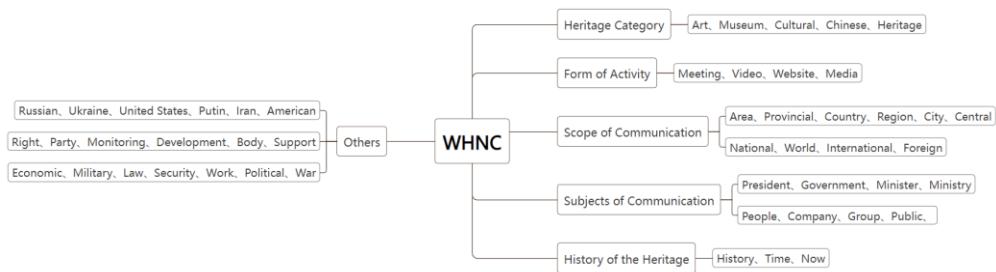


Fig.3: Topic category of top 50 high frequency words in WHNC

Corpus data reveal that both Chinese and western media attach great importance to cultural heritage, as is evidenced by shared keywords such as “culture”, “heritage”, and “world”, which indicates that both Chinese and western media recognize the global significance of cultural heritage. However, significant differences emerge in the specific focus and discursive framing adopted by each side.

Chinese media tend to embed cultural heritage within the contexts of traditional festivals, cultural tourism, and national image-building. That is evidenced by the frequent appearance of such words as “festival”, “local”, “traditional”, “tea”, and “river”, indicating a focus on presenting heritage within the framework of folklore and regional customs. Additionally, the high frequency of lexical terms like “tourism”, “province”, and “village” reflects the alignment between media narratives and national strategies for cultural development. In recent years, the Chinese government has actively promoted the integration of culture and tourism, encouraging the revitalization and utilization of heritage resources. As such, media reporting has increasingly highlighted the economic and symbolic value of heritage within the tourism industry. In contrast, western media tend to adopt a more globalized and contemporary perspective. Keywords such as “global”, “UNESCO”, “industry”, and “economic” suggest a kind of narrative which situates heritage within a modern, international framework and emphasizes its present-day relevance and market potential. Furthermore, what is worth noting is that such words as “Russia”, “Ukraine”, “military”, “war”, and “Putin” show a not inconsiderable frequency, which signal a strong concern about the impact of geopolitical conflicts—particularly the Russia-Ukraine war—on cultural heritage. According to the statistics from the United Nations, by 2023, over 250 heritage sites in Ukraine had been damaged, including the historic center in Odesa, the

medieval churches in Chernihiv, and the Mariupol Drama Theater (United Nations, 2023). Western media often frame such damage as part of what they call “cultural genocide”, frequently attributing responsibility to the Russian government.

Another noteworthy observation is that the term “China/Chinese” ranks among the top keywords in western reporting, suggesting the increasing western attention to China’s presence in global heritage discourse. For example, the opening ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics prominently featured the traditional cultural elements such as the Twenty-Four Solar Terms and imagery from the Yellow River, showcasing Chinese aesthetics and philosophy. Similarly, the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games incorporated such heritage symbols as Liangzhu jade artifacts and West Lake landscapes, using digital technologies to present the charm of eastern civilization on the world stage.

2. Discourse strategies: Official orientation vs. pluralistic expression

In discourse studies, the subject of discourse and communicative purpose are often key to revealing the underlying strategic intentions of the text. Fairclough (1995) argues that discourse is not merely a vehicle for expressing language, but a form of social practice that reflects choices and intentions through the identities, positions, and communicative goals of its actors. Thus, by analyzing the discursive subject and communicative purpose, one can gain a deeper insight into the communication strategies adopted by the media outlets.

The subjects of discourse in news reporting can be typically identified by examining the agents of the reported speech. Figure 4 shows a partial list of search results from the Chinese and western corpora for the verb “say” and its variations (said, says, saying).

Left Context	Hit	Right Context	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
air visions for the city's continued prosperity. Duarte Alves, president of the General Assembly of the Macanese Youth Association, says the city's dramatic progress promises tremendous opportunity for the future.	says the city's dramatic progress promises tremendous opportunity for the future.	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
nd impact of the Beijing Olympic Group in the field of arts and crafts from a comprehensive and multifaceted perspective," Duane says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
l says he already felt like celebrating Spring Festival on the train with other passengers. "It's a very meaningful event," says Ma says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
st standing world," Rao adds. Cao Xiaohu, deputy dean of the China Animation Research School at the Beijing Film Academy, says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
well, with so many people hitting the roads in their cars and others striving to secure seats on trains and planes at once, but many say. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	say. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
very three items purchased. A tourist surnamed Chen from Guangdong province bought a bottle of concentrated repair essence, saying. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	saying. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
good care of their cultural and natural sites. I hope people across the world can see this and do the same with their own culture," says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
feels she is racing against "Time. In another 10 years, it might be difficult to find enough embroiderers to carry on this work," she says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
West. "The theme revolves around deep-rooted family culture in China, and is infused with elements of traditional Han culture," says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
ld have gone there," she said, expressing her delight at the fast and convenient journey. She praised the high-speed train, saying. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	saying. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
112, the city's art scene entered a flourishing period when prominent artists emerged and great talents gathered in the city," Wang says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
exchange with the wider world through the ancient Silk Road. Hui-Chang Tsao, co-curator of the show from the Guimet museum, says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	
re to their visions for the city's continuing prosperity. Wu Zhiliang, president of the Board of Directors of the Macao Foundation, says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	says. The <i>Guosong</i> tripnotes were intended for the country's se	investigation into the case is underway. - The Kazakhstani National News Agency on 25 December cited a Kazakhstani transport sector source as	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	saying that the black box of the Azerbaijan Airlines a	

Fig. 4: Examples of cultural heritage reporting subjects in CHNC and WHNC (partial)

Upon analysis, the subjects of discourse in *China Daily* reports can be generally categorized into four types: Experts, Authorities, Officials, Transmitters and Practitioners (see Figure 5). In western media reports, while experts and academics are also cited frequently as in

China Daily, greater emphasis is placed on voices from international organizations such as the United Nations and government officials from various countries. Additionally, western reports often include perspectives from critics, observers, and activists (see Figure 6).

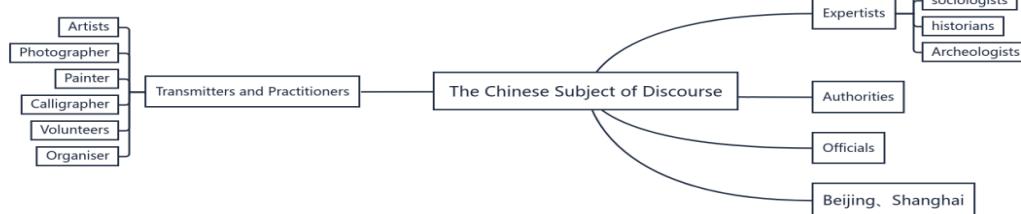


Fig. 5: Subjects of discourse in CHNC

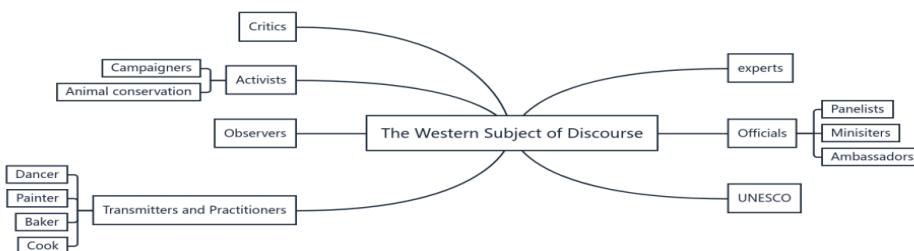


Fig. 6: Subjects of discourse in WHNC

Western media also frequently quote cultural practitioners, but the fields and scope of professions cited differ significantly from those in the Chinese reports. Chinese media primarily focus on professional heritage inheritors from the arts—such as painters, calligraphers and opera performers. In contrast, western media highlights a wider variety of practitioners, including bakers, baristas and chefs. Furthermore, western media are more likely to cite ordinary individuals by name, allowing them to recount their experiences directly. In Chinese media, although the reports frequently describe the

activities of everyday people, they are rarely used as direct quotation. Instead, the direct quotations are typically drawn from individuals in positions of authority or expertise. That may reflect the cultural preference for authoritative voices among the Chinese audience, while western media tend to emphasize individual perspectives to enhance reliability and narrative engagement.

Regarding communicative purpose, the study retrieved sentences containing the connectors of purpose such as “in order to” and “so as to” from both corpora to examine how intentionality is constructed.

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
od, and respect nature from a young age, in order to contribute to building a beautiful China. In	in order to	qualify for financial and operational support from the national Republic
rified herself by jumping into the furnace in order to create enough heat to cast the bell that ha	in order to	er - that we mainly import eggs in order to raise chickens. We need to have our own eggs to begin with. The same
exchanges among different ethnic groups in order to enrich the Chinese nation's sense of a shar	in order to	iety in the economic discussion, in order to reach democratic and academic solutions. Preparatory talks will be held
features and forms of Chinese civilization, in order to explore and explain how a sense of comm	in order to	ing leadership and final oversight in order to rectify misconduct in the selection and appointment of officials. The Par
ica to sustain its economic growth. Hence, in order to facilitate the modernization of Africa and e	in order to	mobile operators on both sides in order to reduce costs for the citizens. "Regulators from both sides will agree on
takes more than 100 different techniques in order to finish, from finely cutting wood and bamb	in order to	appeals and waiting in queues." In order to simplify and streamline the process of receiving citizens, it was decided
ted according to China's 56 ethnic groups in order to fully protect people's rights to education a	in order to	to, or, at any rate, will try to do so in order to somehow contain the Anti-Occupation Movement that has been active
and Archaeology and Liaoning University in order to gain a deeper understanding of local cultu	in order to	an rights organisations, experts, in order to specifically discuss those appeals, those proposals for improving Russi

Fig.7: Search of “in order to” and “so as to” in CHNC

Left Context	Hit	Right Context	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
member the tragic history of the Holocaust so as to cherish the peace today," said Chen Jian, di	so as to	cherish the peace today," said Chen Jian, di	ne season. They stagger their descent in shifts, so as to	not	cause bottlenecks. Ms. Maurer and her family were the se
note the rich values of Eastern civilizations, so as to contribute to the development and progre	so as to	contribute to the development and progre	ent difficulties and zero-employment families so as to	ensure	that each family has at least one member in work. Wo
dern agricultural and photovoltaic sectors, so as to cultivate and develop new areas for contin	so as to	cultivate and develop new areas for contin	ents, and promoted heightened consciousness, so as to	ensure	that the powers conferred by the Party and the peop
crimes, and improve working mechanisms so as to disincentivize criminal attempts, the docum	so as to	disincentivize criminal attempts, the docum	spoken and written languages from each other, so as to	promote	communication and unity among all peoples in the
strengthen emergency response capacity, so as to establish relevant long-term mechanisms a	so as to	establish relevant long-term mechanisms a	isted and improved the family planning policy so as to	promote	balanced development of the population over the l
unity and cultivation of talent and officials, so as to further advance their coordinated develop	so as to	further advance their coordinated develop	them attentively, and put them to good use, so as to	bring	together a full spectrum of bright people for the great
revisional or permanent posts in Xinjiang, so as to improve the structure of officials and their	so as to	improve the structure of officials and their	participation at all levels and in various fields, so as to	ensure	that China's governance and institutions in all sectors
er role in disseminating traditional culture so as to promote the appeal of Chinese culture. He	so as to	promote the appeal of Chinese culture. He	is deceiving the voters, deceiving our citizens so as to	present	oneself as the defender of the people and later to sh
images, videos and archaeological research so as to reproduce the exquisite beauty of the grot	so as to	reproduce the exquisite beauty of the grot			

Fig.8: Search of “in order to” and “so as to” in WHNC

Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the sample search results in *China Daily* and the western media respectively. According to the search results, the communicative purposes in *China Daily* reports can be summarized into four categories: protection and support, advertisement and facilitation, inheritance and foster, as well as development and creation (see Figure 9). Those categories reflect the clear and consistent policy direction of the Chinese government in heritage preservation. In contrast, the communicative purposes found in the western media reports are more fragmented and diverse. The goals vary depending on the specific events and actors involved,

including such intentions as focusing on the population, obeying the law, protecting animals, promoting peace and enhancing respect (see Figure 10). Those micro-level, pluralistic purposes stand in marked contrast to the macro-level, policy-aligned goals emphasized in the Chinese reporting. While Chinese media is closely tied to the broader objective of promoting Chinese culture abroad, western media are more inclined to frame cultural heritage as part of a global commons, emphasizing universal values and links to broader issues such as international politics, peace building and legislation.



Fig. 9: Categories of communication purpose in CHNC



Fig.10: Categories of communication purpose in WHNC

The differences identified in the subjects of discourse and communicative purposes suggest broader divergences in communication strategies. Chinese media, as represented by *China Daily*, emphasize the central role of government in cultural heritage reporting. That official discourse-driven strategy reinforces the state's narrative authority and helps shape a unified national image. In contrast, western media adopt more pluralistic narrative strategies, drawing on diverse perspectives, including those of citizens and community members, to enrich the discourse. That enables western media reports of cultural heritage not only to be more inclusive, but also to have broader international influence. In sum, Chinese media favor state-oriented discourse strategies rooted in national narratives, while western media favor pluralistic strategies that foreground individual voices and intercultural interaction.

3. Historical and cultural Relations: Emphasis on tradition and inheritance vs. focus on reality and function

The distinct discourse strategies employed by Chinese and western media in reporting on cultural heritage are not solely due to the media environment differences, but more profoundly reflect the divergent cultural traditions, value systems, and historical backgrounds. Within the framework of Cultural Discourse Studies, discourse is understood not merely as a tool for expression, but as a medium through which cultural identity, historical memory and social relations are constructed. The present analysis reveals that Chinese media tend to highlight cultural continuity and national identity through authoritative narratives, whereas western media emphasize the social functions and pluralistic expressions of cultural heritage. Those tendencies reflect two fundamentally different orientations in cultural communication.

From the perspective of cultural tradition, Chinese civilization has long placed a strong emphasis on historical continuity and the symbolic role of culture in shaping the national spirit. In *China Daily*, the frequently used terms such as "ancient", "history", "dynasty" and "tradition" reflect a deep-rooted discourse of historical inheritance. Moreover, the dominant discourse subjects cited in the reports are often government "officials" and academic "experts", underscoring the authoritative role of the state in constructing cultural narratives. Drawing on Geert Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory, such a state-centered narrative aligns closely with China's cultural preference for collective values and unified national identity. In contrast, western cultures are generally more oriented toward individualism, rationality, and expressive freedom. Media outlets such as the *BBC* and *The New York Times* often construct cultural heritage narratives from the perspectives of ordinary individuals or marginalized groups. As is shown in Figures 5 and 6, in addition to expert voices, western media frequently quote artists, community members, NGO participants and other non-institutional actors. That "decentralized" discursive strategy reflects not only a respect for cultural diversity, but also the public-service work ethic of western media, which values participatory and democratic expression (Pavarala & Malik, 2021).

Institutional differences between media systems also play a critical role in shaping discourse strategies. As an integral part of China's governance structure, mainstream media tend to align their reporting with national strategic goals (Wang, 2019). Since 2021, for example, China has actively advanced the "going out" strategy in the cultural domain, using heritage narratives to enhance its international discourse soft power. A typical example is the 2022 launch of the Dunhuang "Digital Library Cave" project. By contrast, western media operate within the more market-oriented and pluralistic environments, where

reports often reflect public interests, social tensions or issues of cultural conflict (McManus, 1992). For them, cultural heritage is not only a symbolic resource, but also a lens for connecting past and present, and for exploring contemporary social concerns.

Thirdly, the divergent understandings of what cultural heritage is—and what it is for—also influence discourse choices. In China, heritage is often viewed as the “spiritual lifeblood” of the nation and a marker of collective identity (Liu & Chang, 2023). Accordingly, media discourse focuses on its preservation and inter-generational succession. In contrast, western societies are more inclined to view cultural heritage as a form of “social capital” or “public good” (Murzyn-Kupisz & Działek, 2013), which leads to a greater emphasis on its real-world utility and adaptive value in contemporary society. Those contrasting orientations—emphasis on tradition and inheritance vs. attention to contemporary relevance and function—constitute the fundamental divergence between Chinese and western discourse strategies in cultural heritage reporting.

From what has been discussed above, the differences in discourse strategies between Chinese and western media are not just superficial variations in journalistic style, but rather systemic choices rooted in their distinct cultural traditions and historical experiences. A deeper understanding of those cultural and historical factors is essential for improving cross-cultural awareness and enhancing the effectiveness of international communication on cultural heritage.

VI. CONCLUSION: CULTURAL HERITAGE NARRATIVES THROUGH THE PRISM OF MEDIA

The present study has conducted a comparative analysis of the discourse strategies adopted by Chinese and western mainstream media in reporting on cultural heritage. The findings reveal that Chinese media tend to center on national narratives, emphasizing cultural continuity and national identity, and are characterized by a government-led communication strategy. In contrast, western media place greater emphasis on the global sharing, contemporary application and market value of cultural heritage, and adopt more diversified narratives and individualized perspectives.

The study contributes a new perspective to the field of Cultural Discourse Studies. By integrating corpus-based methods with textual analysis, it not only verifies the applicability of Shi’s theoretical framework to the domain of cultural heritage communication, but also uncovers the historical and cultural logic behind the differing discourse

choices. Furthermore, it addresses a gap in existing literature, which has often focused on policy analysis, tourism or identity construction while overlooking the role of media discourse in shaping cultural heritage narratives. Practically, the findings provide important implications for the cross-cultural communication of cultural heritage. For Chinese media in particular, there is value in drawing from western practices that prioritize individual storytelling and global relevance. By contextualizing Chinese culture within shared global concerns and lived experiences, and by reducing the overt presence of state-centered promotional discourse, Chinese media could have a better performance in gaining international understanding and acceptance.

Nonetheless, the study has certain limitations. First, the data are limited to three mainstream media outlets. Future research could expand the scope to include local media and social media platforms in order to capture a more comprehensive picture of discourse variation. In addition, the study focuses on the period from 2020 to 2025. Although that time span captures the transformative dynamics of heritage communication in the post-pandemic era, it does not allow for the examination of long-term discourse evolution, which remains an important direction for future study.

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