Western Audiences: Role of the International Communication of Chinese Classics

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Chinese Literature, official journal

Panda Series

20 years

149 books in English

66 books in French

Geng Qiang, 2010:88
National Project: Library of Chinese Classics

1994---2007 Chinese to English

• 2007 ---now 8 foreign languages

• 52 volumes 92 books

• covering classics in different fields
Problem--Unpopularity

Panda Series

- 10%  90%
- Library of Chinese Classics
- Scores of volumes sold overseas
- Others presented as national gifts
  - (Geng Qiang, 2010:88)
Objectives

1. possible causes of unpopularity from the perspective of western audiences

2. Possible solution for the international communication of Chinese classics
5W: Harold Lasswell

Lasswell’s Communication Model

- WHO
- COMMUNICATOR
- SAYS
- WHAT
- MESSAGE
- IN WHICH
- CHANNEL
- TO
- WHOM
- RECEIVER
- WITH WHAT
- EFFECT
- EFFECT
Active receiver

• “To whom” refers to the audience in the communication, the listeners, spectators, readers and other information recipient in the communication activities.

• make their own choices according to their requirements and preferences, accepting or rejecting them, sticking to or changing their attitudes, or taking a desired behavior. (Chen Xiaowei, 2013: 97)
Western audiences

• Unfamiliar with China and Chinese culture

• Unpopular Chinese novels

• Unfavorable views of China
Unfamiliarity with Chinese culture

• Questionnaires of ordinary American audiences and college students

• Mo Yan 1/371 residents

• 1/76 students

• Monterey Institute of International Studies

• Nothing about other Chinese writers

(Bao Xiaoying, 2014)
Unpopular Chinese novels

• Chinese novels unpopular in western world, at least in USA
• Try not to believe that readers in other countries will be fond of Chinese literature just because of China’s great influence

(Howard Goldblatt, 2014)
Unfavorable views of China

- In the United States, negative views of China increased by 26 percentage points between 2006 and 2016.
• Chinese youth warmed to the U.S. over the same time period, with unfavorable views falling 12 points.

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**Older generations viewed each other’s countries more negatively in 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
<th>Oldest - youngest gap</th>
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<td>Chinese unfavorable view of U.S.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>+19</td>
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<td>U.S. unfavorable view of China</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>+15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Differences shown are statistically significant. Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. PEW RESEARCH CENTER
The international communication

Chinese culture

still in its primary stage
Audience-oriented Strategy

content selection

translation strategy

ideology weakening
Content Selection

• Easy to understand: simplified versions

• Interesting to read

• Theme: universality
Domestication Strategy

• Yanfu, Evolution and Ethics

• classical style

• Creative translation
Ideology Weakening

• Howard Goldblatt  Mo Yan’s novels

• ideological text such as “communists”, “working hard to learn Marxism”, “Mao Zedong is today’s hero”

• weaken or even delete these information
Conclusion

• “government-oriented strategy”

• “audience-oriented strategy”
謝謝