

# *The Relationship between Chinese Language International Promotion and Public Diplomacy*

Liang Cui

*Krirk University, Khet Bang Khen District, Bangkok, 10220, Thailand*

**Keywords:** Public diplomacy; international promotion of Chinese language; current strategy

**Abstract:** In recent years, with the improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, China's influence in the world has been increasing. Public diplomacy plays a vital role in maintaining the national image and its international influence. As an important part of public diplomacy, the international promotion of Chinese language is not only a simple language teaching, but also should more than undertake the mission of public diplomacy.

## 1. Introduction

"Public diplomacy" refers to the diplomatic mode in which a government of a country understands and learns about the situation and influences the foreign public through cultural exchanges and information projects, so as to improve its national image and international influence, and then increase its national interests. Public diplomacy is an important supplement to traditional diplomacy, and its important value is gradually recognized by all countries. Public diplomacy can help other countries better understand their own country, shape national image and enhance national soft power. It was first proposed by American Edmund Valley Lane (Edmund Gullion) in 1965. Early studies of public diplomacy were all conducted by the US. In 1987, the us state department published the dictionary of international relations terms of public diplomacy is defined as: "initiated by the government communication project, using information communication means such as radio, understand, learned and influence the public opinion of other countries, reduce other governments and people to the United States, avoid complicated relations, improve the image in the foreign public and influence, and increase the activities of the us national interests". No matter how public diplomacy is interpreted, it focuses on the aspects of culture, exchange and communication. For China, international education of Chinese plays an important role in cultural communication, and is of major significance as one of the important means of Chinese cultural communication. The purpose of Chinese international education is not only to teach a language, but also to clear the barriers of cross-cultural communication through language learning and lay a foundation for the spread of Chinese culture. Public diplomacy is a new thing in China. At the 11th meeting of overseas diplomatic envoys in July 2009, China proposed for the first time to launch public diplomacy. However, the similar public diplomacy activities adopted in China have long been [1].

## 2. Our public diplomacy practice

As early as in the 1920s and 1930s, China has invited many international friends to visit Yan'an. Famous American journalist Edgar Snow. He wrote his own experience in Yan'an into the book "Red Star Over China", which was first published in London in October 1937. The book objectively evaluates the Chinese people's spirit of hard work and simplicity and the tenacious will of the book.

After the end of the Second World War, the world was increasingly polarized. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally established. In the face of domestic troubles and foreign troubles, China adopted a "one-sided" foreign policy and decisively chose the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. At this time, diplomacy is mainly dominated by socialist countries, and public diplomacy is also mostly in propagating ideology. China's education of Chinese as a foreign language also began from this period, in July 1950, Tsinghua University set up the first new China teaching Chinese as a foreign language institutions — Chinese language training class.

In 1971, the famous "ping-Pong diplomacy" was arguably the most successful public diplomacy, which opened the door to the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. In the same year, China resumed its legal seat in the United Nations. In 1973, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Chinese language as one of the working languages of the General Assembly and the Security Council. With the gradual deepening of reform and opening up, overseas students and overseas students are increasing, and the cultural exchanges between China and the world are increasingly frequent [2]. As a way of public diplomacy, the international promotion of Chinese language is particularly important at this time.

With China's increasing international status and increasing international influence, it is necessary to help more countries understand the real China and restore the real national image through public diplomacy activities. The success of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo has enabled more foreigners to enter China and want to learn Chinese culture. For a country with a history of more than 5,000 years, learning Chinese has become a new trend. It also pushes the public diplomacy to a new stage, followed by the further development of the international promotion of The Chinese language.

## 3. Current strategy for the international promotion of the Chinese language

There are two main strategies for the international promotion of Chinese language, namely, "please come in" and "go out".

"Please come in" means "invite" foreign students to come to China to study Chinese. Some of these students are holding scholarships provided by the Chinese government, and many are studying in China at their own expense. Language learning is greatly influenced by environmental factors, so "invite in" international students can conduct immersive Chinese learning in China. I can not only experience the original Chinese, improve my Chinese level, but also feel the charm of Chinese culture in contact with the daily life of ordinary Chinese people, and then integrate into Chinese society and form Chinese thinking. Use Chinese thinking to think about China, feel China, understand China, and influence the people around them after returning home, so that they can also really understand China, and eliminate the misunderstanding of China. "Please come in" is a good job of public diplomacy, but slightly passive [3].

"Going out" is relatively active. "Going out" is not so simple as sending students to students abroad. "Going out" at the national level mainly refers to the establishment of "Confucius Institutes" and the establishment of "Confucius Classroom". Confucius institute is sino-foreign cooperation to establish non-profit education institutions, is committed to adapt to the needs of the people around the world to learn Chinese, improve the people of the world understanding of Chinese language and culture, strengthen education and cultural exchanges and cooperation with the world, China

development of friendly relations with foreign countries, develop Confucian culture, promote the development of multicultural world, to build a harmonious world. The Confucius Institute carries out exchanges and cooperation in Chinese language teaching, Chinese and foreign education and culture. In 2004, Hanban opened its first Confucius Institute in South Korea. As of December 2019, China had established 550 Confucius Institutes and 1,172 Confucius classrooms in primary and secondary schools in 162 countries (regions). Since its establishment, the Confucius Institute has provided services for tens of millions of students from other countries to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture, and has become an important platform [4] for countries around the world to understand China.

#### **4. Factors restricting the international promotion of Chinese**

The international promotion of Chinese is still in a short period of time. Due to various reasons, there are still many difficulties in the promotion process and many restrictive factors in the implementation process.

##### **4.1 Insufficient participation**

It is only more than ten years since the strategic deployment of Chinese promotion in China. Compared with China's economic development, cultural development lags relatively backward. Cultural soft power is the necessary support to build a strong China. The extensive participation of all sectors of society is needed to truly increase the depth and participation of the international promotion of Chinese language.

##### **4.2 The changeable international environment**

English is the common language of most countries in the world, but also the mother tongue of many countries. It has a certain say in economic development and cultural and academic development. The learning difficulty is much smaller than Chinese, and it has obvious language advantages.

##### **4.3 Teaching problems**

The development time of Chinese international education is short and the number of students is increasing. However, the arrangement of teaching materials, teaching methods, teaching design and other teaching aspects still need to be solved. The cultural differences at home and abroad bring about the differences in education methods, which brings challenges to teaching. Nowadays, the internationalization is becoming more and more obvious, and the requirements for teachers are becoming higher and higher. At present, the gap of Chinese teachers is large, the teaching level of teachers is also different, and the mobility is also great.

#### **5. Thoughts on the future of the international Promotion of the Chinese language**

In 1987, China established the "National Leading Group Office for International Promotion of Chinese Language" (Chinese ban), a public institution directly under the Ministry of Education, which is committed to providing teaching resources and services for Chinese language and culture for countries around the world. Since the establishment of Hanban, the international promotion of Chinese language has developed rapidly, especially in the last ten years, there seems to be a "upsurge" of learning Chinese around the world. However, the author believes that the international

promotion of Chinese language still needs to pay attention to the following problems.

### **5.1 Promotion should not be aggressive**

As an important means of public diplomacy, the purpose of Chinese international promotion is not only to promote the Chinese language, but more importantly, to promote Chinese language for people around the world to understand Chinese culture, so as to understand China's national policy and truly understand China. As an international platform for the international promotion and cultural exchange of the Chinese language, Confucius Institutes have been called "propaganda machines" by the governments and media of some countries, aiming to promote socialism. There are indeed malicious people in the rumors. But such a thing is also worth our reflection, whether we are too aggressive in the process of language promotion?

The author believes that the promotion of language and the dissemination of culture should have a premise, that is, "mutual respect". Before the promotion of language and culture, we should fully understand the language and culture of the other party, understand the local customs and customs, friendly the exchange of language and culture on the basis of equality and respect, and try to avoid sensitive topics, especially the taboo topics of the other party's country and nation. The dissemination of language and culture should not stand on their own subjective standpoint, but should think on the standpoint of the other side, fully consider for the other side, so that the other side will readily accept and identify.

### **5.2 Textbook compilation and the construction of teachers**

The Chinese language has a long history, and Chinese characters originate from hieroglyphics. The study of Chinese rose in modern times, but a hundred years of history, and the research method of foreign languages borrowed, is not completely applicable to Chinese. So that although there are many kinds of Chinese textbooks, there are few excellent textbooks that can perfectly combine systematic, scientific and practical. The uneven quality of teaching materials restricts the teaching of Chinese language. On the other hand, the serious lack of teachers is also an urgent problem to be solved in the international promotion of Chinese language. According to incomplete statistics, the number of Chinese teachers in the world is nearly 50,000, while the number of Learning Chinese abroad exceeds 30 million. The gap of Chinese teachers is more than 5 million, and there is a serious shortage of teachers.

### **5.3 Enhance the overall national strength**

Chinese is a language with a long history, and its formation can be traced back to the Shang and Zhou dynasties. In the Han Dynasty, with the rise of the Silk Road, Chinese language spread to Central Asia and Europe. During the reign of Zhenguan in the Tang Dynasty, Chang'an was a rare metropolis with a population of one million. All states came to the Dynasty, and business travel brought Chinese to the world. But in modern times, since the Opium War, the national strength is very small, and the Chinese people are proud of learning the foreign language. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength and the gradual promotion of its international status, Chinese was included in the common working language of the United Nations, and Chinese was widely promoted.

It can be said that the degree of language use is a manifestation of a country's comprehensive national strength. As the universal language, English is the proof of the glory of the British Empire called "sun never sets" and the emerging United States. If Chinese wants to be promoted more widely, the first thing is to continuously improve the comprehensive national strength of our

country and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. When China stands at the top of the world power, Chinese will certainly become the common language of the world.

## 6. Conclusion

As a country with a large population and a civilization of more than 5,000 years, our language and culture are extensive and profound. It is the witness of history and the development of Chinese civilization to today. And Chinese is also a very charming language. Nowadays, more and more foreigners yearn for and love Oriental culture. Language, as the carrier of cultural communication, should be paid more attention to. Chinese will become more and more international, so as international practitioners of Chinese, we have more obligation to actively spread Chinese culture, so that more people can know about China and like China. Through the exchange and promotion of language and culture, more people will have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, which will play a role of cultural influence in our international diplomacy. This is also an important role that language and culture can play in national diplomacy. Let the charm of language and culture infect everyone who knows it, and deepening the language and culture part in the process of Chinese internationalization is the top priority of international Chinese language promotion.

## References

- [1] Bao Wenyong. *The International communication of The Chinese language from the perspective of public diplomacy. Journal of Shanghai Business School*, 2013, 14 (3), 62-66.
- [2] Feng Lingyu. *The International Promotion of Chinese language and Chinese public diplomacy. Yangtze River Forum*, 2010 (6), 72-78.
- [3] Li Zhi. *Cultural diplomacy: an interpretation of communication science. Beijing: Peking University Press*, 2006.
- [4] Zheng Mengjuan. *International Communication of Chinese language: Main Problems and their Countermeasures. Journal of Jiangnan University*, 2006, 25 (6), 76-80.