

A Multidimensional Discourse Analysis of News Reports on the Overseas Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the New Era

Based on the Corpus of the People's Daily from 2013 to 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to delve into the characteristics and evolutionary trends of discourse in the news reports about Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) experts published in the People's Daily from 2013 to 2023. By meticulously constructing a corpus of relevant articles on the overseas development of TCM in the People's Daily and utilizing advanced search tools such as Antconc and Weiciyun, this research systematically analyzes the shaping process of the image of TCM in the media and its changing patterns over time. The findings reveal that, against the backdrop of the new era, reports on the overseas development of TCM exhibit unprecedented diversity and depth, comprehensively reflecting its widespread dissemination and profound influence globally, as well as its pivotal role and significance in modern society. These reports not only facilitate the international dissemination of TCM culture and recognition of its therapeutic effects but also promote international academic exchanges and cooperation, further consolidating the position and influence of TCM in the global healthcare system. Moreover, this study provides a unique perspective for deeply understanding the media presentation of TCM and contributes valuable empirical materials to media research, thereby enriching relevant theoretical frameworks and practical guidance.

Keywords: *People's Daily, Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Overseas development, Corpus.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, TCM has been highly valued and become the focus of attention of the people. On the international stage, TCM has gradually gained recognition, and treatment methods such as acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicines have been widely accepted. Many medical colleges and universities worldwide have offered TCM courses to promote its international development. The global demand for TCM is increasing, especially in Asia, Europe, and North America. Extensive reports in international media reflect the growing influence of TCM in the global medical field [1]. As the official newspaper of the CPC Central Committee, People's Daily plays an important role in disseminating the correct public opinion on TCM. It has become a source of spiritual strength for the whole Party and

the people. Inheriting, innovating, and developing TCM is not only a crucial part of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, but also an important task for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation [2]. Against this backdrop, this study takes People's Daily as the source of corpus, collects news reports on the overseas development of TCM from 2013 to 2023, and establishes a self-built corpus accordingly to conduct a multi-dimensional discourse analysis.

2. SOURCES OF LITERATURE AND TECHNICAL ROUTE

As one of the most authoritative newspapers in China, the reports in People's Daily not only reflect the official attitude towards TCM, but also influence the public's perception of TCM and its scholars. Therefore, studying the reports on TCM

development in People's Daily is of significant value in understanding the social and cultural significance of TCM in the new era.

The reports in People's Daily on the cases and applications of TCM on the international stage not only deeply reveal the historical roots and theoretical framework of TCM, but also effectively promote the international community's understanding and recognition of its cultural depth and scientific value. In addition, by focusing on international cooperation projects and academic exchanges in TCM, these reports not only showcase the international influence of TCM academic research, but also strengthen the national commitment to inheriting and developing TCM traditions, thereby enhancing confidence and expectations for the future development prospects of TCM in the international community [3].

Based on the above understanding, this article will start with domestic mainstream media and take the news reports on TCM scholars in People's Daily from 2013 to 2023 as the research object. It will adopt a combination of corpus-based quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to conduct research and analysis, aiming to answer the following three questions: How did People's Daily report on the overseas development of TCM from 2013 to 2023? What are the linguistic characteristics of these reports? And what are the impacts of TCM's overseas development?

3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE CORPUS OF "PEOPLE'S DAILY'S REPORTS ON THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT OF TCM"

3.1 Corpus Collection, Screening, and Organization

The author first relied on the People's Daily graphic database to conduct sample searches. Within the time frame of 2013 to 2023, a search was conducted in the titles, subtitles, shoulder titles, and main text of People's Daily for any of the keywords "overseas Chinese medicine," "foreign Chinese medicine," or "Chinese Chinese medicine." A total of 2,574 news reports were obtained. These reports were manually screened according to the strictly defined subjects of Chinese medicine reports in this study. Based on the screening results, additional searches were conducted, and ultimately 27 reports were selected as the research objects of this study, serving as the

main content for constructing the corpus. These reports were then organized into editable Word format texts.

3.2 Corpus Processing

The collected corpus was organized and content such as images was removed. The text was cleaned and denoised using the word segmentation tool Corpus Word Parser and a text processor. The processed text was exported in TXT document format, named with "News + serial number," and stored in a folder named "News."

4. ANALYSIS OF OVERSEAS REPORTS ON TCM

4.1 Diversified Headlines Highlighting the Miraculous Effects of TCM

As the essence of news reporting, news headlines not only convey information but also serve as an important tool to attract readers and resonate with them. In the reports of the People's Daily and its overseas edition, the headlines about TCM exhibit a diversified character. These headlines cover not only the dissemination of TCM culture and the practice of TCM treatment, but also delve into the significant role of TCM in international exchanges.

Based on a statistical analysis of 27 selected headlines, we found that compound headlines account for a large proportion. These compound headlines typically consist of a lead, a main title, and a subtitle, with the main title serving as the core and the lead and subtitle providing guidance, supplementation, and emphasis. For instance, headlines such as "Chinese Medical Aid Team Teaches Local Students TCM Culture" and "African Medical Students — Serving Patients Better with TCM Therapies" introduce specific events or individuals, making the content more vivid, specific, and engaging for readers.

In these reports, the People's Daily and its overseas edition emphasize the miraculous effects of TCM. For example, headlines like "Chinese Military Doctor Gave Me a Second Life" (Overseas News) and "International Students Studying TCM — 'Willing to Learn TCM for Another Ten or Twenty Years'" showcase TCM's unique advantages and remarkable efficacy in treating various complex diseases through specific cases and the voices of international students, sparking great interest and curiosity in TCM therapies

among the public. This reporting strategy has not only raised public awareness and acceptance of TCM, but also further promoted the international dissemination and exchange of TCM culture. As indicated by headlines such as “TCM Has Spread to 196 Countries and Regions” and “TCM Contributes to Human Health and Well-being,” the internationalization of TCM is accelerating, and the global influence of TCM culture is gradually increasing.

In conclusion, through the use of diversified headlines, the People’s Daily and its overseas edition have successfully conveyed the miraculous effects and profound essence of TCM to a wide

audience, further enhancing TCM’s recognition and influence worldwide. This is not only a heritage and promotion of TCM culture, but also a significant contribution to human health.

4.2 High-Frequency Vocabulary Highlighting the Unique Characteristics of TCM Culture

By importing the corpus into “Weiciyun” for analysis, we can obtain the distribution of part-of-speech in the collected and organized corpus, as shown in “Figure 1”.

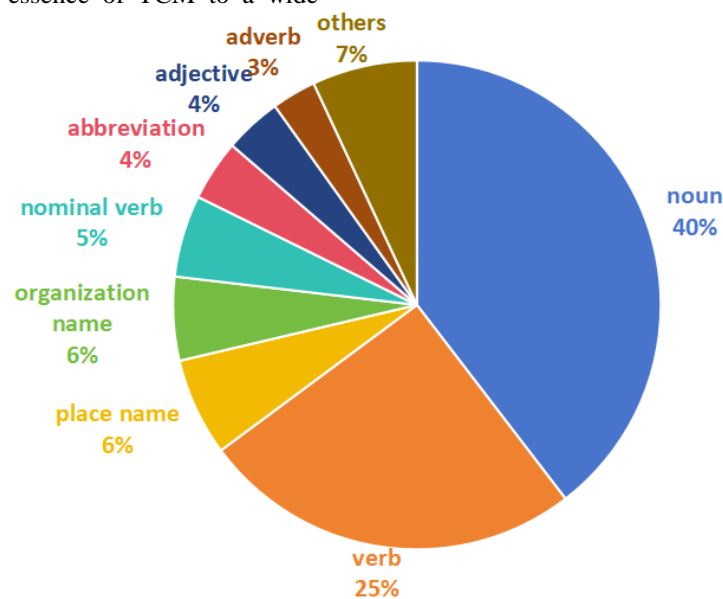


Figure 1 Pie chart of part-of-speech analysis.

The “News” txt document from the corpus was imported into Antconc for high-frequency word statistics. As shown in Figure 1, the main parts of

speech in the corpus are nouns and verbs. The high-frequency words of each major part of speech are presented in “Table 1” and “Table 2” as follows:

Table 1. High-frequency nouns in overseas development reports on TCM in People’s Daily (Top 10)

Numerical Order	Word	Part-of-Speech	Word Frequency
1	culture	Noun	156
2	patient	Noun	74
3	acupuncture	Noun	71
4	country	Noun	58
5	populace	Noun	49
6	center	Noun	45
7	overseas Chinese	Noun	41
8	hospital	Noun	38
9	student	Noun	35
10	expert	Noun	31

Table 2. High-frequency verbs in overseas development reports on TCM in People’s Daily (Top 10)

Numerical Order	Word	Part-of-Speech	Word Frequency
1	treat	Verb	86
2	learn	Verb	51
3	massage	Verb	51
4	diagnose and treat	Verb	46
5	provide	Verb	43
6	proceed	Verb	41
7	promote	Verb	41
8	introduce	Verb	39
9	conduct	Verb	37
10	co-construct	Verb	35

Based on the provided corpus analysis results, starting from the high-frequency nouns and verbs, we delve into the discourse characteristics of the People’s Daily’s reports on the overseas development of TCM.

4.2.1 Analysis of High-frequency Nouns

In the high-frequency noun list, words such as “culture,” “patient,” “acupuncture,” and “country” occupy prominent positions. The frequent appearance of these nouns reflects the following discourse characteristics: (1) Cultural Export: The high frequency of “culture” indicates that cultural export is a crucial theme in the overseas development reports on TCM. This not only involves the promotion of TCM medical techniques but also encompasses the dissemination of TCM culture, emphasizing the international influence of TCM as a treasure of traditional Chinese culture. (2) Patient Care: The word “patient” frequently appearing as a high-frequency noun highlights the practical actions of TCM in serving the people and caring for their health overseas. This embodies an important direction of TCM’s overseas development, which is to provide substantial medical services and assistance to overseas people. (3) Professional Vocabulary: “Acupuncture,” as a representative treatment method of TCM, frequently appears, reflecting the emphasis and promotion of TCM professional technology in the reports. This helps enhance the professional image and recognition of TCM in the international medical field. (4) National Role: The frequent use of “country” suggests that the overseas development of TCM has received strong support and promotion at the national level. This discourse characteristic underscores the leading role and strategic position of the nation in the development of international TCM undertakings.

4.2.2 Analysis of High-frequency Verbs

In the high-frequency verb list, words such as “treat,” “learn,” “massage,” and others frequently appear, revealing the following discourse characteristics: (1) Therapeutic Effects: “treat” being the most frequently used verb emphasizes the treatment effects and practical value of TCM in overseas medical practice. This contributes to enhancing the credibility and status of TCM in the international medical field. (2) Learning and Exchange: The high frequency of “learn” reflects the learning exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and foreign medical personnel in the overseas development of TCM. Such exchanges facilitate the international dissemination and localization of TCM techniques. (3) Professional Procedures: The frequent use of TCM-specific procedural vocabulary like “massage” demonstrates the importance and promotion of TCM professional techniques in the reports. This enhances the professional image and recognition of TCM in the international medical field. (4) Promoting Development: The appearance of verbs such as “provide,” “proceed,” and “promote” reveals the proactive attitude and actions in the overseas development of TCM. These verbs express the determination and confidence of TCM to continually make progress and innovate in the international medical field.

In conclusion, the discourse characteristics of People’s Daily’s reports on the overseas development of TCM are primarily embodied in aspects such as cultural export, patient care, professional technology, and national role. Furthermore, the reports emphasize the therapeutic effects, learning exchanges, professional procedures, and development promotion of TCM in overseas medical practice. The repeated use of

these words not only provides readers with basic knowledge of TCM but also delves deeper into revealing its unique treatment methods and philosophical thoughts [4]. Moreover, through the frequent occurrence of these words, the traditional wisdom and modern applications of TCM are disseminated more broadly, constructing a solid bridge for shaping TCM's image and facilitating cultural exchanges in the international community [5].

4.3 Media Reports Reshaping the International Image of TCM

The extensive coverage of TCM by People's Daily has reshaped its international image with distinctive and positive strokes. These reports not only demonstrate the practicality of TCM as an effective medical treatment but also underscore its seamless integration of profound traditional knowledge with modern medical technology, highlighting TCM's adaptability and innovation.

In the reports, the international influence of TCM has been fully acknowledged, particularly through international academic exchanges and student education. TCM's pivotal role in global health affairs has been prominently highlighted. Concurrently, as an integral part of Chinese culture, TCM's bridging function in international cultural exchanges has been frequently mentioned, further showcasing its cultural value and international status.

These reports by People's Daily have not only elevated TCM's position in the international medical field but also infused strong momentum into its modernization and internationalization as promoters of this valuable medical heritage. These meticulously crafted reports collectively contribute to constructing a positive image of TCM's overseas development, earning it broader international recognition.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE AND EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION OF TCM

5.1 Significant Enhancement of International Awareness of TCM

Thanks to the extensive coverage of international development cases of TCM by People's Daily, coupled with various

communication channels such as domestic and foreign newspapers, videos, and the internet, the unique charm of TCM has been fully displayed. By delving into the successful applications and unique medical practices of TCM on the international stage, these reports have not only sparked public curiosity and the desire to explore but also significantly boosted global awareness of TCM and further promoted the dissemination of TCM culture and international exchanges [6]. TCM is no longer merely viewed as a traditional medical system but rather as a vital component of human health endeavors, increasingly understood and recognized by a broader audience worldwide.

5.2 Promotion of Deeper International Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation in TCM

The internationalization of TCM extends beyond the dissemination of medical techniques; it fosters profound cultural exchanges and cooperation. The frequent hosting of international academic exchanges on TCM, the continuous expansion of international cooperation projects, international support missions by medical teams, and the upsurge of foreign students studying TCM collectively build bridges for the international communication of TCM culture. These activities not only propel the global dissemination of TCM culture but also enhance mutual understanding and respect between Chinese and foreign medical cultures, offering new impetus and ideas for innovative development in the medical sector. They realize a mutually beneficial and win-win situation in international cooperation [7].

5.3 Establishment and Consolidation of TCM's Position in International Healthcare

The in-depth reporting by People's Daily on the international development of TCM has not only showcased the widespread application and remarkable efficacy of TCM globally but also emphasized its crucial role in public health emergencies through specific cases. These reports have not only boosted the global visibility of TCM but also firmly established its important position within the international healthcare sector. With its unique theoretical system and therapeutic methods, TCM has contributed Chinese wisdom and solutions to the global healthcare cause, further consolidating its irreplaceable status on the international medical stage. Looking ahead, as the

international influence of TCM continues to grow, its position within the global healthcare system will only become more solidified.

6. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Great Prospects for TCM Going Global

Through in-depth research and analysis of the news reports on the overseas development of TCM published in the People's Daily and its overseas editions from 2013 to 2023, this study found that the newspaper employed diverse headline designs and content presentations, making the reports more vivid and engaging by introducing specific events and case studies of individuals. This approach effectively captured the public's interest. Furthermore, the reports emphasized the miraculous effects and unique advantages of TCM, highlighting its positive contributions to the international healthcare field, thereby enhancing public awareness and acceptance of TCM. In terms of discourse construction, People's Daily adopted a positive language style, underscoring the international influence of TCM culture and the remarkable efficacy of TCM treatments. This provided strong support for the international dissemination and exchange of TCM. These reports have had extensive and positive impacts both domestically and internationally, not only increasing public attention to TCM but also promoting the inheritance and innovation of TCM culture. Moreover, they provided a robust foundation for promoting and applying TCM in the international healthcare field, fostering international cooperation and exchange in this area.

6.2 Challenges Facing the International Development of TCM

Despite significant achievements in the process of internationalization, TCM still faces multiple challenges. The primary obstacle lies in the inconsistency of discourse and differences in international cognition. While mainstream media such as the People's Daily actively showcase the therapeutic effects and international accomplishments of TCM, disparities in cultural backgrounds and medical systems have led to a lack of unified international understanding. Secondly, there exists a gap between cultural export and in-depth comprehension, as the complex theories and unique treatments of TCM necessitate more educational outreach and promotion to

enhance international comprehension. Furthermore, although the actual therapeutic effects of TCM have been widely praised, the lack of scientific validation has limited its widespread application in the international healthcare field. Lastly, despite strong policy support, variations in laws and regulations across countries pose major obstacles to TCM's entry into international markets. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the construction of an international discourse system, deepen cultural exchanges and education, promote scientific research and clinical validation, and facilitate policy coordination and regulatory adaptation to comprehensively advance the internationalization of TCM.

To sum up, the internationalization of TCM is a process fraught with both opportunities and challenges, requiring a balance between traditional respect and innovative development.

7. SUGGESTIONS

To gain a more comprehensive understanding and promote the overseas development of TCM, future research should delve deeply into the acceptance and adaptability of TCM in different countries. This can be achieved through transnational case studies, examining the dissemination effects and market responses of TCM in diverse cultural contexts, and assessing public perceptions and needs to inform internationalization strategies and market positioning. Additionally, it is crucial to conduct specific case studies incorporating the influence of policies and regulations, analyzing their impact on the overseas development of TCM, and exploring how policy adjustments can facilitate its internationalization process.

Furthermore, evaluating public acceptance levels will help determine the potential of TCM in international markets, enabling the formulation of differentiated marketing strategies to enhance its visibility and influence globally. Discussions should also center on the integration and complementarity between TCM and modern medicine, fostering collaborations in research, clinical practice, and education to advance the modernization and internationalization of TCM. Simultaneously, strengthening the international dissemination and education of TCM culture is imperative to elevate global understanding and appreciation of this traditional medical system. Pushing forward the internationalization of TCM research and clinical validation will boost its

scientific recognition and influence within the international medical community, ultimately enhancing its status and competitiveness in the global healthcare landscape.

In summary, future research efforts should prioritize aspects such as the acceptance and adaptability of TCM in various countries, the impact of policies and regulations, public acceptance levels, the integration of TCM with modern medicine, the international dissemination and education of TCM culture, and the internationalization of TCM research and clinical validation. These endeavors will provide deeper theoretical and practical guidance for TCM's globalization strategy, further propelling its development on the international stage and contributing significantly to human health worldwide.

8. CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of the discourse characteristics and evolutionary trends in news reports on the overseas development of TCM in the People's Daily from 2013 to 2023. By constructing a corpus of relevant articles and employing advanced tools, the author has systematically explored how the image of TCM is shaped in the media and its changing patterns over time. The author's findings underscore the unprecedented diversity and depth of reporting on TCM's international expansion, revealing its widespread influence and pivotal role in modern society. These reports contribute to enhancing global awareness and recognition of TCM's therapeutic effects and promoting international academic exchanges and cooperation. Ultimately, this study not only provides valuable insights into the media presentation of TCM but also enriches theoretical frameworks and practical guidance for the further internationalization of this ancient yet vibrant medical system.

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