



Article

Research on Foreign-Language Video Dissemination Strategies for The Chinese Modernization Narrative

Hanfei Li, Yangyang Cai, Tianyou Hu, Xinyi Chen, Tingting Zhong, Mengbo Wu and Dan Ye *

School of Foreign Studies, Wenzhou University, Wenzhou 325035, China

* Correspondence: 20170011@wzu.edu.cn; Tel: +86-13-567-181-852

How To Cite: Li, H., Cai, Y., Hu, T., Chen, X., Zhong, T., Wu, M., & Ye, D. (2025). Research on Foreign-Language Video Dissemination Strategies for The Chinese Modernization Narrative. *Journal of Educational Technology and Innovation*, 7(4), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.61414/v69cgd29>

Received: 3 October 2025

Revised: 10 December 2025

Accepted: 20 December 2025

Published: 31 December 2025

Abstract: In the context of globalization, it is crucial for China to foster cultural confidence and present the achievements of Chinese-style modernization to the world. Among them, video dissemination, as the mainstream communication method, is a popular way of cultural transmission. Therefore, it is of great significance to produce videos that tell Chinese stories in foreign languages. This paper analyzes a large number of foreign-language videos that spread the Chinese modernization narrative. Through this analysis, it studies and summarizes several video production strategies, and constructs a video production strategy model framework. This study aims to help video creators have more guidelines to produce short videos that spread Chinese-style modernization. It can promote Chinese culture, facilitate cultural exchange, and demonstrate cultural confidence.

Keywords: Chinese modernization narrative; foreign-language videos; cultural communication

1. Introduction

The international dissemination of the Chinese modernization narrative faces significant challenges in today's globalized media landscape. The rise of foreign-language short videos on platforms like YouTube and TikTok presents a transformative opportunity for "soft communication". Leveraging visual primacy, micro-narratives, and affective appeal, this format can translate abstract concepts into contents related, potentially bypassing traditional barriers to foster genuine cross-cultural dialogues. Yet, the effective use of this medium remains under-theorized. There is a pressing need for a systematic production framework that strategically aligns the core themes of Chinese modernization with the principles of effective cross-cultural video communication.

This study addresses this gap. It analyzes successful video cases across ecological, economic, political, cultural, and social domains to decode their thematic logic. Building upon the previous study (Hong et al., 2024), we explore new pathways for the overseas dissemination of Chinese modernization in the new era and investigate the innovative model of "short videos + Chinese stories" to present a dynamic China in motion. Synthesizing theories from communication, linguistics, and cultural studies, the paper then proposes an integrated production model built on five core strategies: emotional universality, multimodal synergy, subjective consciousness, lifeworld narratives, and demand orientation. The resulting framework provides actionable guidance for creators, aiming to shift the narrative from mere awareness to genuine understanding and value-based resonance.



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. This is an open access article under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Publisher's Note: Scilight stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

2. Analysis of the Material

2.1. Ecological Videos: The Universal Appeal of Nature-Themed Content

2.1.1. Selection Criteria

Ecological protection represents a global consensus, largely free from ideological boundaries and facilitating cross-cultural empathy. As Earth is our shared home, environmental protection is a universal aspiration that directly benefits all humanity's survival and well-being. This theme naturally resonates across diverse cultures and nations.

Furthermore, China's recognized achievements in areas such as giant panda conservation and wetland restoration provide a credible narrative. These successes position China as both a participant and a reference model in global ecological governance, offering a concrete pathway to illustrate the practical outcomes of Chinese modernization.

2.1.2. Communication Advantages

This category of videos leverages two complementary communication strategies. Firstly, it employs a Visual Primacy Strategy, utilizing high-production-value techniques akin to BBC-style natural documentaries—such as aerial shots, macro photography, and time-lapse—to create visually spectacular content that aligns with international aesthetic preferences. This emphasis on universal visual appeal transcends language barriers, effectively attracting and engaging a global viewership. Secondly, it adopts a Depoliticized Narrative approach by focusing on the on-the-ground conservation actions of researchers, volunteers, and local communities, rather than directly promoting governmental policies. This shift frames the narrative from a more objective and human-centric perspective, which serves to reduce the “cultural discount,” aligns with familiar “civil society” storytelling paradigms in Western media contexts, and ultimately enhances receptivity and emotional resonance among international audiences.

2.2. Economic Videos: The International Adaptability of Development Narrative

2.2.1. Selection Criteria

The tangible outcomes of over four decades of Reform and Opening-Up provide empirically verifiable evidence of China's modernization path, facilitating recognition within international economic discourse.

Adopting a micro-level perspective—illustrating broader economic transformations through individual stories (e.g., entrepreneurs, migrant workers)—makes macroscopic trends relatable. This narrative technique mitigates the abstraction of policy discussions, thereby increasing audience engagement and prompting reflective consideration.

2.2.2. Communication Advantages

These videos employ an integrated communication approach that combines concrete evidence with human-scale storytelling, all framed within a globally resonant context. At the micro-messaging level, credibility is established by citing data from authoritative international institutions (e.g., World Bank), with dynamic visualization effectively illustrating macro trends like GDP growth. Simultaneously, the narrative is grounded by spotlighting individual cases, such as a Shenzhen entrepreneur's journey, which replaces abstract “national symbols” with the universally relatable image of the “striver”. This “data-driven, human-story-anchored” technique is then contextualized at the macro-narrative level by framing China's Reform and Opening-Up within the broader story of globalization—for instance, through references to WTO accession or the experiences of foreign-invested enterprises. This dual-layered strategy serves a critical purpose: it embeds China's development within a shared international memory and cognitive framework. Consequently, it not only enhances narrative credibility and relatability but also effectively counters perceptions of “isolated development”, allowing the story to resonate with established global economic narratives.

2.3. Political Videos: Symbolism and Soft Expression

2.3.1. Selection Criteria

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as a multinational cooperation framework, inherently balances national image-building with the need for international acceptance. Its focus on shared developmental interests provides a universal basis for communication and enjoys relatively higher familiarity among foreign audiences.

2.3.2. Communication Advantages

This integrated communication strategy operates on both symbolic and sensory levels to construct a universally accessible narrative. On the symbolic-visual level, it utilizes “universal symbols of global trade” such as bridges and railways replaces overt political terminology. This minimizes geopolitical associations, allowing audiences to immerse themselves in the content rather than focusing on oppositional national dynamics. Additionally, footage showing Chinese and foreign workers collaborating conveys “win-win cooperation” rather than “Chinese dominance”.

Complementing this, the sensory-auditory level employs a strategy of multicultural fusion. weaving musical instruments, rhythms, and artistic motifs from cultures along the BRI routes (e.g., Central Asian strings, African drums) into the soundtrack and visual tapestry. Together, these layered strategies use concrete symbols and shared cultural cues to materially construct and emotionally evoke the abstract ideal of a “Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” making it a felt experience rather than just a stated concept.

2.4. Cultural Videos: The Participatory Nature of Festival Culture

2.4.1. Selection Criteria

Traditional festivals (e.g., Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival) possess high recognizability value. Foreign audiences often possess some familiarity with these festivals, which embody universally appealing ideals of human happiness. Engaging festival activities and symbolic meanings spark interest and curiosity.

Drawing strategic parallels with Western festivals (e.g., Spring Festival/Christmas for “family reunion”; Mid-Autumn Festival/Thanksgiving for “harvest gratitude”) serves as an effective cognitive bridge, fostering resonance while backgrounding cultural or religious differences.

2.4.2. Communication Advantages

This approach employs a two-pronged strategy to translate Chinese culture into an accessible and engaging experience for international audiences. First, it uses Ritual Embodiment to make abstract cultural values tangible and participatory. Concepts like filial piety or communal harmony are not merely explained but are demonstrated through concrete, observable rituals such as families making dumplings together or teams competing in dragon boat races. These actions provide a visual and kinetic entry point, making the culture feel active and relatable, thereby fostering imitation, sharing, and deeper viewer engagement.

Second, building on this experiential foundation, the Cultural Analogy Strategy facilitates cognitive comprehension by bridging the unfamiliar with the known. It employs accessible analogies—for instance, describing “mooncakes” as a festive pastry central to reunion, akin to a traditional pie in Western holidays—to create immediate mental references. This technique effectively lowers cognitive barriers, demystifies foreign elements, and transforms potential cultural distance into a point of connection, making the overall viewing experience not only more accessible but also intellectually satisfying and enjoyable.

2.5. Social Videos: De-Securitization of the Modernization Narrative

2.5.1. Selection Criteria

Narratives of “Chinese modernization” must actively counter the Western “China threat theory” and dispel unwarranted speculation and vilification. By presenting modernization through relatable civil society case studies, in a non-threatening and approachable manner, these videos aim to soften securitized discourses and mitigate the prevalence of threat-based narratives in foreign media.

2.5.2. Communication Advantages

This multi-layered narrative strategy operates across three interconnected levels to effectively communicate Chinese modernization to a global audience. At the conceptual level, it employs Deconstruction, breaking down this overarching political concept into tangible, non-ideological vignettes of daily life—such as green energy projects, high-speed rail commuting, and rooftop solar panels. This scenario-based approach grounds the abstract in the perceptible, using relatable experiences to replace didactic statements and thereby preempt ideological resistance.

At the representational level, it incorporates Diversified Narratives, strategically featuring first-person accounts and community stories from ethnic minority groups (e.g., Tibetan herders adopting solar technology, Zhuang artisans thriving through e-commerce). These authentic perspectives serve a dual purpose: they directly

counter foreign narratives of cultural homogenization or oppression, while vividly showcasing the inclusive and diverse character of modernization within China.

Finally, at the delivery level, it implements Targeted Adaptation, tailoring content through nuanced multilingual and cultural adjustments. For instance, English-language versions may frame messages around “global responsibility” and climate action, whereas versions for Southeast Asian audiences might emphasize shared developmental experiences like poverty alleviation or urbanization. This tripartite strategy—concept deconstruction, narrative diversification, and targeted localization—collectively ensures the message is not only comprehensible and credible but also culturally resonant and strategically effective across different audience segments.

3. Strategies of Video Creation

3.1. To Create Videos Based on Human Common Emotions and Values

3.1.1. Concept and Literature Review

Empathy, often referred to as “empathic understanding” or “sympathy”, plays a crucial role in the realm of journalism and communication. It serves not merely as a simple display of emotional resonance between individuals but is deeply intertwined with social, political, and cultural constructs. Empathy communication encompasses the process where individuals engage in receiving, being influenced by, expressing, and sharing information within a group emotional setting. In the context of cross-cultural communication, emotions act as the vital bridge connecting the audience with the creative work. They have the power to bring people together, breaking down the barriers erected by cultural disparities.

Regarding the empathetic communication of national images, communications can evoke positive emotional responses from the audience, which in turn strengthens their connection and identification with the content being communicated. It highlights the importance of leveraging empathy to convey a nation’s image in a more appealing and relatable way. In the research (Cheng & Yu, 2022) analyzing Li Ziqi’s short-video comments, discovered that when videos convey shared emotions and values, it can enhance the audience’s sense of enjoyment and well-being. This, in turn, facilitates cross-cultural communication, suggesting that universal emotions and values can serve as a common language across different cultures.

In cross-cultural video creation, emphasizing emotional output and exploring common human emotions and values is of utmost importance. Emotions like love for family, friendship, and the longing for a better life are deeply ingrained in human nature. By incorporating these elements into videos, creators can strike a chord with viewers from diverse cultural backgrounds, triggering emotional resonance and thus enhancing the videos’ dissemination effectiveness.

3.1.2. Video Analysis

Speaking of China Festival

This remarkable series of videos centers around traditional Chinese festivals, offering a rich exploration of cultural heritage. The Spring Festival special is a prime example. It vividly presents scenes of family reunions, where people gather to post Spring Festival couplets, a symbol of good luck and new beginnings, and enjoy a sumptuous New Year’s Eve dinner. These scenes are not just about the physical act of coming together but are a celebration of family bonds.

From an emotional standpoint, the portrayal of family reunions stirs a deep-seated longing for family warmth in the hearts of the audience. The concept of family is universal; people around the world value the love and support that a family provides. This emotional connection transcends cultural boundaries, allowing overseas audiences to feel the joy and significance of the Spring Festival. For instance, a family gathering around the dinner table, sharing stories and laughter, can evoke similar memories or desires in viewers from different countries.

Regarding values, the Spring Festival embodies values such as bidding farewell to the old and welcoming the new, and praying for good fortune. These values resonate with the universal human pursuit of progress and a positive future. They reflect the hope for a better life, filled with prosperity and happiness. By presenting these values in the video, it becomes a powerful medium for communicating Chinese culture. It not only showcases the unique traditions of the Spring Festival but also aligns with the values that people worldwide hold dear, thus triggering a resonance that bridges cultural divides.

Wild Wonders of China-Natural Protected Areas in China

This video offers a captivating look into China’s nature reserves, highlighting their magnificent scenery and rich ecological resources. The visuals of vast, untouched forests, clear and meandering streams, and rare species of flora and fauna are truly awe-inspiring.

In terms of emotional expression, these images evoke a sense of love and reverence for nature in the audience. Nature has a universal appeal; it soothes the soul and reminds people of the beauty and complexity of the world we live in. Whether it's the sight of a majestic deer in the forest or a colorful bird fluttering among the flowers, these scenes inspire a deep-seated appreciation for the natural world. People from all over the globe can relate to this feeling, as nature is a common heritage that unites humanity.

From a values perspective, the video is a strong advocate for China's ecological protection efforts. It aligns with the global push for sustainable development. By showing the measures taken to protect these natural areas, such as conservation projects and sustainable management practices, the video promotes the value of environmental stewardship. Overseas audiences can understand and appreciate China's commitment to safeguarding the planet's ecological balance. This not only helps in promoting China's ecological achievements but also fosters a sense of global responsibility towards nature.

3.1.3. Summary

Creating videos based on shared human emotions and values is an indispensable strategy in cross-cultural communication. As demonstrated by the analysis of Festive China and Wild Wonders of China-Natural Protected Areas in China, when video content taps into common human emotions and values, it can effectively overcome cultural barriers. It allows for a deeper connection with overseas audiences, fostering understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

In future video creation, creators should further explore and incorporate a wide range of common emotional elements. This could include not only family and friendship but also emotions like courage, kindness, and resilience. At the same time, positive values such as respect for diversity, equality, and the pursuit of knowledge should be integrated. By doing so, Chinese culture can be presented in a more engaging and accessible way, facilitating its global reach. This approach also helps in building bridges between different cultures, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation, and ultimately contributing to the construction of a more harmonious and inclusive world community.

3.2. To Use Multi-Model Discourses in the Videos

3.2.1. Concepts and Literature Review

Multimodal discourse refers to the way of conveying meaning by integrating multiple semiotic modalities such as language, images, and sound. In short video communication, it achieves collaborative narration through elements like text subtitles, visual images, music, and sound effects, breaking through the limitations of single symbols. For example, picture colors can convey emotional tones (such as green symbolizing ecology), background music can set the atmosphere (such as drumbeats enhancing a sense of tension), and characters' movements can enhance the authenticity of expression. In international research, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2021) proposed the Visual Grammar theory to analyze multimodal collaboration from dimensions such as "representational meaning". In China, Hu (2007) systematically combed the multimodal theoretical system, and Zhang (2009) constructed a comprehensive analytical framework including modalities and context. Existing research focuses on theoretical construction and traditional media, with insufficient discussion on how multimodality adapts to cross-cultural contexts in the overseas communication of short videos.

3.2.2. Video Analysis

This section selects typical videos in the fields of "Ecology" and "Culture". Then we analyze their application strategies and effects in the overseas communication of "China's Story" from the perspective of multi-modal discourse.

The Analysis of Ecology: Wild Wonders of China Natural Protected Areas in China

(1) From the Perspective of Visual Modality

Constructing ecological wonders through aerial and macro lenses is one of the characteristics of popular videos. Aerial photography shows the continuous snow-capped mountains of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with the blue-white contrast conveying a sense of purity; macro shots focus on the fur of Tibetan antelopes and the petals of alpine rhododendrons, inspiring awe for life. The slow movement of the lens guides the audience to immerse themselves in nature, strengthening the perception of "a treasure house of ecological diversity".

(2) From the Perspective of Auditory Modality

Integrating original ecological instruments and English narration is also an element of popular videos. The ethereal sound of the Tibetan Zamuni (a traditional Tibetan stringed instrument) echoes the concept of "harmony

between man and nature”; the emotional expression in British English narration (such as “precious gifts from the earth”) is paired with sounds of wind and birdsong to enhance authenticity and narrow emotional distance.

(3) From the Perspective of Linguistic Modality

The video is of concise adaptation of Chinese-English subtitles. English subtitles use words like “sanctuary” to convey conservation concepts, while the narration incorporates international discourse such as “biodiversity conservation”, balancing Chinese characteristics with cross-cultural understanding.

The Analysis of Culture: Festive China

(1) From the Perspective of Visual Modality

From the perspective of visual modality, there are symbolic elements convey cultural connotations. The video uses red as the main color tone, incorporating typical Spring Festival visual symbols such as lanterns, Spring Festival couplets, Chinese knots, and red envelopes. Scenes of large red lanterns hanging high occupy multiple shots. The saturation and brightness of red enhance the festive atmosphere, aligning with overseas audiences’ stereotypes of the Chinese Spring Festival as “lively and auspicious”. Meanwhile, close-up shots of traditional patterns on the lanterns (such as auspicious clouds and mythical beasts) convey the sophistication and profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture. The footage also intersperses scenes of folk activities like dragon and lion dances, dumpling-making, and window-decoration pasting. The characters’ costumes (such as Tang suits and cheongsams) and gestures (such as the traditional bowing gesture during New Year greetings) form distinct visual identifiers, constructing a three-dimensional picture of Spring Festival culture.

(2) From the Perspective of Auditory Modality

This video integrates traditional and modern sound elements all together. The background music incorporates modern arrangement elements based on traditional folk music (such as *Joyful Sheep* played on the erhu), preserving the traditional charm of Spring Festival culture while meeting modern aesthetic needs. For example, when showcasing the Chinese New Year’s Eve dinner scene, the background music uses a brisk bamboo clapper rhythm as the foundation, paired with piano and string instruments to create a warm and lively family atmosphere. Environmental sounds such as firecracker noises and New Year greetings (Happy Chinese New Year) are added to enhance the authenticity and sense of participation in the festival. The voiceover switches between Chinese and English: Chinese (with English subtitles) is used to introduce the historical origins of the Spring Festival, conveying the cultural authenticity; when explaining cultural meanings, it switches to English narration to ensure overseas audiences understand key information. For instance, “*nianyefan*” (Chinese New Year’s Eve dinner) is interpreted as “a family reunion dinner symbolizing unity and prosperity”, achieving effective meaning transmission through cultural translation.

(3) From the Perspective of Multi-modal Collaboration

This video concludes narrative structure and emotional mobilization. The video adopts a narrative structure of “panoramic display—detailed portrayal—emotional sublimation”, achieving cultural narration and emotional mobilization through multi-modal collaboration. At the beginning, panoramic shots show the overall atmosphere of cities and villages during the Spring Festival (such as streets decorated with lanterns and colorful streamers, bustling New Year’s goods markets), constructing a macro cognitive understanding of the cultural scene. “Subsequently”, close-up shots focus on details such as family members preparing the Chinese New Year’s Eve dinner together and elders giving red envelopes to younger generations. Using multi-modal elements including visuals (warm family scenes), auditory elements (family laughter and the clinking of tableware), and language (commentary emphasizing values such as “family” and “harmony”), the video evokes the audience’s emotional resonance with family love and reunion. The ending uses aerial photography to show the brightly lit city night scene and fireworks blooming in the sky, accompanied by stirring music and the voiceover “May Chinese people worldwide share the joy of the Spring Festival, and may Chinese culture illuminate the world”. This sublimates individual emotions into recognition of Chinese culture and a vision for its dissemination, achieving a progressive communication process from “cultural display” to “emotional resonance” and then to “value identification”.

3.2.3. Summary

Multi-modal discourse provides a three-dimensional narrative for the overseas communication of Chinese stories through symbolic integration: ecological videos break down cultural barriers through audio-visual collaboration, while cultural videos promote symbolic identity through emotional storytelling. At present, it is necessary to optimize cross-cultural adaptation (e.g., incorporating Western musical elements for European and

American audiences), strengthen modal coordination (e.g., adapting to fragmented viewing on short-video platforms), and deepen the integration of content and form (avoiding formalism). In the future, emerging technical modalities such as VR/AR can be explored to build a more immersive multi-modal communication system.

3.3. To Build up Cultural Confidence of Creators

3.3.1. The Definition and Significance of Cultural Confidence

Cultural confidence is the deep recognition of a nation, country or political party of its own cultural values and its firm belief in the vitality of its own cultural values. Therefore, it is an important driving force for social progress and development.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, cultural confidence has been elevated to the level of national strategy. On the basis of the original road confidence, theoretical confidence, and institutional confidence, cultural confidence has been incorporated into the formation of the “four self-confidence” system which highlights its importance. In the report of the 20th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly called for “promoting cultural confidence and improvement, and forging a new splendor of socialist culture”, and made a strategic deployment.

“Without a high degree of cultural confidence and the prosperity of culture, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”. Strong cultural soft power, excellent traditional cultural deposits and efficient means of cultural dissemination are all inseparable from the background and strength of cultural confidence.

Cultural confidence is not only the key to maintaining national cohesion and centripetal force, but also an important cornerstone for responding to global challenges and telling good Chinese stories. In the process of globalization, multiple cultures are deeply intertwined and fiercely colliding. If we lack the certainty of our own cultural system and the strength of our inheritance, the local culture may be gradually weakened under the impact of foreign cultures which will ultimately lead to a crisis of spiritual identity and the double dilemma in the cultural inheritance.

As an emerging product in the era of network, short videos are profoundly affecting the effectiveness of cultivating cultural confidence through innovative means of cultural communication. Since the new era, it has been affected by many factors such as the lagging behind of Chinese cultural education, the interaction of multiple cultures in the society, and the lack and fault of the national culture’s own retention and inheritance, so the quality of China’s cultural confidence has been caught in difficulties again and again. However, the emergence of short videos has made the means of cultural dissemination more diversified, the forms of expression more diversified, and the speed of dissemination more efficient.

For short-video creators, it is essential to build up cultural confidence, which not only reflects national cohesion, but also necessary to show China’s contemporary style to the world. This can make their video content richer and more widely accepted. For example, in Talking about Chinese Festivals, the author introduces the 24 Solar Terms which is a Chinese intangible cultural heritage, with national style background music, vivid live action footage, and interesting Chinese animation. It reflects the concept of cultural confidence, self-reliance, and self-reliance, which is quite popular among domestic and foreign viewers.

3.3.2. Analysis of Videos

In terms of videos that show the cultural aspects of Chinese modernization, the 24 Solar Terms chapter in the video series Talking about Chinese Festivals is very popular among viewers, with 99,000 likes and 53,000 retweets, attracting many comments and pop-ups. In terms of content selection, the 24 Solar Terms is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and is also known as China’s fifth greatest invention. It is not only a compass for agricultural production, but also a weathervane for folk culture. Nowadays, the 24 Solar Terms have penetrated into every aspect of people’s clothing, food, housing and transport. The 24 Solar Terms are the spiritual bond and common knowledge of the Chinese people. Therefore, the 24 Solar Terms are also an important expression of the Chinese’s cultural confidence. In terms of video presentation, the video uses live-action filming combined with Chinese style animation to make the video more vivid and interesting. It retains the elements of Chinese style, but also embodies the contemporary Chinese style to achieve a good integration. In terms of content selection, music settings, material forms, etc. Talking Chinese Festival links the traditional culture of the Chinese nation with a long history, tells a good Chinese story and reflects the Chinese’s sense of cultural confidence.

In terms of videos showing the ecological aspect of Chinese modernization, Wonderland China is one of the high-quality videos, with 12,000 views. In terms of image quality, the creators use high-definition lenses and wide-angle images to show the great beauty of China’s mountains and rivers without leaving any stone unturned which is a strong manifestation of cultural confidence. Meanwhile, in terms of textual content, the video introduces a series of means and measures for ecological governance and nature protection in China which fully demonstrates the achievements and effectiveness of Chinese modernization.

In terms of videos showing the political aspects of Chinese modernization, Belt and Road is one of the most prominent, with 151,000 views, attracting the attention of many viewers. The video shows the positive impact of the “Belt and Road” policy on China and even neighboring countries. Thus, China’s political and cultural confidence has gone beyond its borders, benefiting neighboring countries and truly achieving “Cherish one’s own beauty, respect other’s beauty, and when both beauties are respected and cherished, the world will become one.” This reflects the advancement and inclusiveness of Chinese modernization.

3.3.3. Summary

To sum up, video creators must establish cultural confidence which is the identity of a nation’s cultural heritage. Establishing cultural confidence not only improves the quality of video content, but also makes videos disseminated overseas more culturally embedded and value-identified and encourages more people to learn about the deep history of Chinese culture and the flourishing status of Chinese modernization.

3.4. *To Make Creation from Daily Life*

3.4.1. Conceptual Framework

The rise of self-media has democratized content creation, with its core feature being “decentralized storytelling”. Ordinary people’s daily lives have gradually become crucial material for national narratives. Jenkins (2023) proposed the theory of “participatory culture”, which manifests uniquely in the Chinese context: content creators on short-video platforms serve not only as documentarians of individual lives but also as nodes for disseminating state discourse. This dual identity was described by Zhao (2022) as “narrative symbiosis in the digital age”—for instance, when a Sichuan farmer films his orchard, he is simultaneously recording daily life and inadvertently participating in the national narrative of “rural revitalization”.

3.4.2. Video Analysis

The Green Revolution in Everyday Life

Ecological discourse primarily focuses on the emerging trend of “daily environmentalism”. While traditional environmental advocacy often employs grand narratives (e.g., global warming), self-media fosters emotional connections through “tangible green living”. For example, users sharing balcony gardening videos are effectively engaging in public discussions about carbon neutrality.

In Wild Wonders of China, a telling detail emerges: the camera lingers as a forest ranger bends to pick up a plastic bottle. This “unperformed act” carries symbolic weight—environmental conservation is not just a state-led project but an everyday practice. The video juxtaposes professional research equipment with the ranger’s worn-out canteen, dismantling the elitism often associated with environmentalism.

China in Motion: Wetlands adopts an “urban nature diary” narrative structure. Weekly episodes document seasonal changes in the same wetland, using “slow looking” to imply that ecological preservation is not a campaign but a sustained daily habit. Non-professional figures like birdwatchers and art students populate the scenes, constructing an inclusive vision of environmental participation.

Individual Faces in Growth Narratives

Economically, Harvey’s (2020) “spatial fix” theory materializes in self-media through visuals like delivery riders’ dashcam footage or cross-border e-commerce livestreams. These clips showcase economic vitality while subtly interrogating labor conditions.

Discover China: Reform and Opening-Up achieves a breakthrough with its “embodiment of economic data”. When the voiceover mentions “7.2% GDP growth”, the frame cuts to a vendor in Yiwu’s commodity market counting banknotes from different countries. The rapid succession of monarchs’ faces on currency notes becomes a visual metaphor for economic globalization.

The video’s portrayal of “new infrastructure” is equally ingenious: a 5G base station worker video-calling his family during a break. This detail accomplishes a triple narrative—showcasing technological achievement, reflecting livelihood improvements, and hinting at new labor dynamics under digital economies. Such “nested narratives” exemplify self-media’s approach to economic storytelling.

Translation of Policies into Lived Experience

Political communication undergoes “softening” by anchoring state policies in personal stories. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) evolves from bureaucratic jargon into narratives of transnational friendship—be it a freight train driver’s diary or an African student’s Chinese cooking tutorial.

The BRI promotional film’s “dining car” sequence is a masterclass in political storytelling. A Kazakh chef learning to make hand-pulled noodles while a Chinese engineer attempts traditional flatbread transforms infrastructure cooperation into a “meeting of tongues”. This “gut politics” strategy elicits physiological resonance for geopolitical strategies.

Notably, the video manipulates temporality: a dawn-lit train crosses time zones, with passengers’ watches displaying Beijing, Almaty, and Moscow time. This visual device elevates the BRI from a spatial concept to a symbol of “shared human time”, deftly sidestepping controversies like debt-trap diplomacy.

Digital Rebirth of Tradition

Cultural identity construction exhibits “digital revival of tradition”. When young creators recreate Qingming Festival rituals on short videos, they practice “digital filial piety”—both preserving and redefining traditions.

In videos like *Festive China*, Dragon Boat Festival innovates with “QR-coded dragon scales”, allowing viewers to scan for regional race updates. This merges collective memory with digital interactivity, exemplifying Thompson (2022)’s concept of “tradition’s programmability”.

A split-screen technique contrasts granny’s handmade zongzi with factory assembly lines, presenting tradition’s dual existence in modernity without hierarchy—a hallmark of self-media’s inclusive cultural representation.

Living Mirrors of Modernization

Social modernization’s paradox surfaces in “county-town youth” content: Starbucks openings alongside images of left-behind elders compose nuanced commentaries on Chinese-style modernity.

Chinese Path to Modernization captures this duality in a “pastoral delivery station” scene. A Tibetan girl tracks yak-meat logistics on her smartphone, prayer flags fluttering behind her—a tableau of “layered modernity” (Abbas, 2023) where digital and traditional realms coexist.

The video’s anti-climactic “smart elderly care” segment—focusing on volunteers teaching WeChat hospital bookings rather than high-tech gadgets—demonstrates narrative sophistication in reflecting social realities.

3.4.3. Conclusion: Narrative Empowerment of Everyday Life

Self-media’s revolutionary impact lies in recognizing the “narrative value of mundane moments”: morning mist over wetlands annotates ecological civilization, delivery routes map digital economies, and binational marriages embody a “community with a shared future”.

While ecological videos aestheticize sustainability, they sidestep industrial trade-offs; economic narratives celebrate growth yet hint at costs; political content weaponizes emotional resonance (BRI = friendship); cultural programs commodify traditions; and social documentaries promote unity while eliding dissent. This dialectic—advancing state agendas through micro-stories while leaving room for audience interpretation—defines self-media’s dual role.

Future research must address: How do we reconceptualize the interplay between personal and collective memory in this new narrative grammar? The answer will reshape our understanding of state-society interactions in the digital age. As China’s digital sphere evolves, self-media will remain a battleground for meaning-making, where everyday life serves as both narrative lens and ideological prism.

3.5. To Choose Useful and Interesting Topics to Share Culture

3.5.1. Concepts and Literature Review

Cultural Communication and Festival Symbols

In the context of globalization, festival culture has become an important carrier of cross-cultural communication. According to Hofstede’s (2003) theory of cultural dimensions, the differences in values of different countries can be reflected through festival customs. For example, Chinese Spring Festival emphasizes “collectivism” and “family reunion”, while Western Christmas pays more attention to personal expression and religious significance. The theory of “cultural mobility” put forward by Appadurai (1996) also points out that festivals have become an important carrier of cross-cultural communication. Appadurai (1996)’s theory of

“cultural fluidity” also points out that holiday traditions undergo localization during the process of spreading, such as the Chinese New Year celebrations in overseas Chinese communities that incorporate local elements.

The Role of Practicality and Fun in Cultural Communication

The effectiveness of cultural communication depends on whether the content is both practical for example, life skills, social etiquette and interesting referring to anecdotes and interactive experiences. According to the motivation theory of Hungarian scholar Dornyei (1994), learners are more likely to accept content that is fun and interesting. For example, the teaching of making rice dumplings at the Dragon Boat Festival (practical) combined with the legend of “Qu Yuan casting himself into the river” (interesting) can enhance memorization.

Related Research

Existing research on festival culture mainly focuses on the level of semiotic analysis, while there is a relative lack of research on how audiovisual media can optimize the effect of cultural communication through the bilingual format. Against this research background, the innovative value of the video series “Talking about Chinese Festivals” is highlighted: firstly, the bilingual control mode it adopts effectively reduces the language barrier, providing a convenient learning path for non-native speakers of Chinese; secondly, by integrating animation and live-action shooting as a visual narrative technique, the series strengthens viewers’ memorization effect; Finally, the program adopts a lightweight expression strategy, transforming complex traditional customs into “cold knowledge” or interactive “challenge tasks”, which not only lowers the threshold of understanding, but also makes its content naturally fit the logic of contemporary social media communication, thus significantly enhancing the breadth and depth of cultural communication.

3.5.2. Video Analysis

Practical Themes

The “Festive China” video series innovatively constructs a multidimensional practical value system that perfectly matches traditional culture with modern needs through three key dimensions. In the realm of life practices, the program transcends the boundaries of traditional festival promotion. It delves deeply into the culture of Spring Festival red envelopes and engages in a cross-temporal dialogue between this age-old tradition and electronic red envelopes in the era of mobile payments. Regarding the Dragon Boat Festival, the program adopts the innovative approach of “food tutorials”, showcasing everything from ingredient selection to packaging methods. In the dimension of language communication, the program establishes a creative bilingual comparison system for cultural proper nouns. For example, it translates “New Year’s Money” as “lucky money”, preserving the cultural essence while conforming to English expression habits. This provides a standardized reference for cross-cultural communication. Most groundbreaking is the program’s modern interpretation. It has keenly captured the cultural consumption characteristics of young people and set up a social media debate on “dumplings vs. soup dumplings” for the winter solstice feature. It also used big data to visualize regional dietary preferences, making traditional culture take on brand-new, modern-day vitality. This three-dimensional content structure ensures the purity of cultural inheritance and gives traditional festivals practical significance in keeping with the times.

Fun Theme

The “Festive China” video series uses three creative dimensions to reconstruct the modern expression paradigm of traditional culture. In terms of narrative reconstruction, the program pioneered the use of “cross-cultural inter-textual” techniques. The Lantern Festival special uses 3D animation technology to recreate the story of “Dong Fangshuo’s Wise Rescue of a Courtesan” and sets up a parallel montage with the Shakespearean classic “Romeo and Juliet”, creating a poetic dialogue between Eastern and Western love narratives. The Tanabata special employs the strategy of “cultural translation”, deconstructing the Magpie Bridge legend into an “ancient version of a long-distance relationship survival guide”, which activates the modern resonance of traditional stories by reinterpreting the emotional context of contemporary youth. The program deconstructs the millennium Magpie Bridge legend using the strategy of “cultural translation” into a “survival guide for ancient long-distance relationships”, activating the modern resonance of traditional stories by recoding the emotional context of contemporary youth. In terms of innovative expression, the program creates a unique “time and space folding” presentation. The Mid-Autumn special creates a surreal collage between Li Bai’s classical “inviting the moon with a cup” mood and the circle of friends’ nine-cell moonlighting behavior. It completes the postmodern deconstruction of traditional aesthetics in a new visual language.

Sharing of Foreign Cultures

Through the careful construction of a cultural frame of reference, the series provides an in-depth presentation of cross-cultural dialogue. In the realm of cultural comparison, the program innovatively establishes the “Festival Parallel Universe” section. The Lantern Festival special juxtaposes the metaphorical wisdom of traditional Chinese lantern riddles with the childish traditions of Western Easter egg hunts. The Mid-Autumn Festival feature reveals philosophical differences between East and West in dealing with life and death issues by comparing the rituals of “burning paper to offer to ancestors” with Halloween’s “trick-or-treating”. Regarding globalization, the program offers a unique perspective on “localized innovation”: the Dragon Boat Special chronicles the design of the Swedish Dragon Boat Racing Team’s original slogan, and the Lunar New Year Special showcases the fusion of traditional Zao candies with chocolate in overseas Chinatowns, vividly presenting the creative transformation of cultural dissemination. The program’s most valuable aspect is its semiotic interpretation. It establishes a “dual-context” analysis model of cultural symbols and uses dragon imagery as an example to explain its auspicious symbolism in Eastern contexts and its representation of evil in Western narratives. This dual decoding effectively dissolves cognitive barriers in cross-cultural communication.

3.5.3. Conclusions

The “Festive China” video series has successfully constructed a three-part communication model: “Practical—Interesting—Intercultural”. First, practicality makes it a tool for language learning and cultural experience. Second, interest attracts young audiences through narrative innovation. Lastly, comparing foreign cultures promotes mutual understanding and avoids “othering” prejudice. The comparison of foreign cultures promotes mutual understanding and avoids “othering” prejudice. In the future, this kind of content could be combined with virtual reality (VR) technology, such as the “Virtual Chinese New Year Temple Fair”, or user-generated content (UGC), such as soliciting festive videos from overseas audiences, to deepen interaction. The spread of festival culture is about more than just export; it’s also about dialogue, and “Festive China” video series provides such a bridge.

4. A Strategy Model for Communicating Chinese Modernization

The international communication of Chinese modernization necessitates transcending cultural barriers through innovative narrative strategies that evoke emotional resonance and value recognition among overseas audiences. Zhang (2009) set up a theoretical framework for multimodal discourse analysis. Based on this preceding analysis, this paper proposes a systematic framework comprising five core elements, offering creators a pathway grounded in both theoretical depth and practical value:

4.1. Emotional Universality

Emotional universality is the cornerstone of humanized narratives. Utilizing shared human emotions (e.g., festivals, ecological stewardship, aspirations for a better life) as entry points transforms Chinese modernization into relatable individual stories. For instance, showcasing the entrepreneurial journey of returning youth within “rural revitalization” demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between modernization and traditional culture, mitigating the abstraction of political discourse.

4.2. Multi-Modal Synergy

Multi-modal synergy can be the multidimensional expression of cross-cultural symbols. Integrating visual symbols (high-quality cinematography), auditory elements (English narration with Chinese cultural resonance), and textual metaphors (cultural annotations in bullet comments) constructs an “audio-visual rhetorical network”. An example is digital Dun Huang conservation videos using animation to depict mural restoration, complemented by universally accessible musical language, achieving dual transmission of culture and technology.

4.3. Subjectivity Consciousness

Subjectivity consciousness is the creative transformation of cultural confidence. Creators must transcend the “gaze of the other”. When presenting symbols of modernization (e.g., high-speed rail), they should simultaneously elucidate underlying philosophical concepts like “Harmony (He)”, such as ecological protection wisdom in western railway construction. Adding value layers enhances discourse depth. The narrative logic exemplified by Li Ziqi, embedding cultural confidence within aesthetics of daily life, offers a valuable reference.

4.4. Lively Presence

Lively presence serves as the micro-politics in the era of social media. Employing an “everyday epic” strategy uses the modernization experiences of ordinary individuals (e.g., couriers, intangible cultural heritage artisans) as microcosms. Filming, for instance, “5G tea farmers” using live-streaming to transmit skills demonstrates technological empowerment and the modern adaptation of tradition, dissolving the alienation inherent in grand narratives.

4.5. Demand Orientation

Demand orientation is the communication rationality in the knowledge economy. Theme selection adheres to the “practical and interesting” principle: (1) Skill-based (Chinese e-commerce operations); (2) Cultural comparison (Chinese vs. foreign festivals); (3) Experiential (foreigners participating in Chinese community governance). Value communication is naturally integrated by fulfilling the audience’s “instrumental needs”.

The five dimensions of this framework exhibit dynamic interrelationships: Cultural Confidence (Element 3) forms the psychological foundation for creation; Lively Narratives (Element 4) and Emotional Resonance (Element 1) constitute the content methodology; Multi-modal Discourse (Element 2) and Thematic Strategy (Element 5) provide the technical underpinning (See Figure 1). Future research could quantify the weighting of each element across different cultural contexts and explore the application boundaries of AI-Generated Content within this framework. Only by adhering to the unity of “Empathetic Communication” and “Value Concretization” can the international communication of Chinese modernization achieve the cognitive leap from being “heard” to being “understood”.

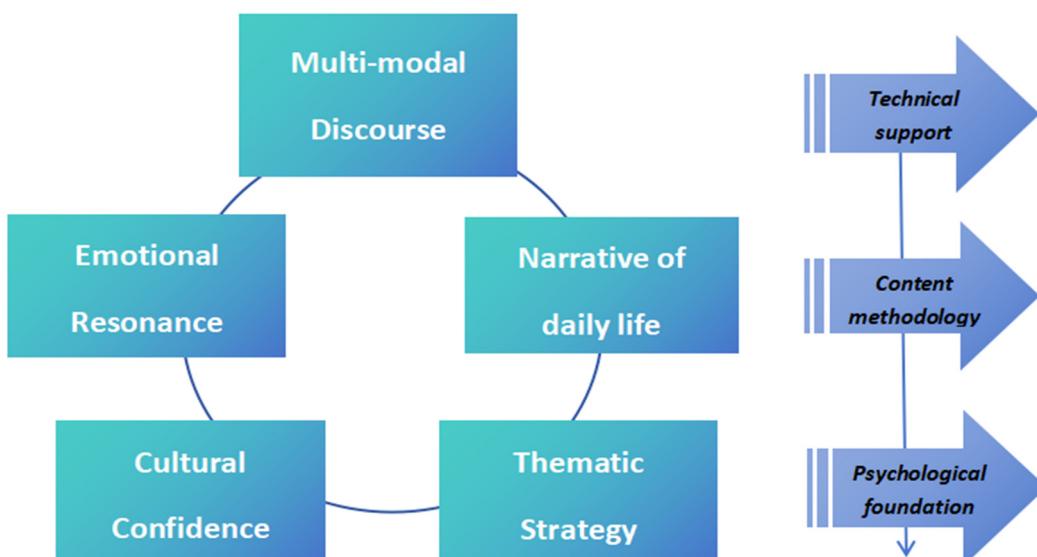


Figure 1. A strategy model.

5. Conclusions

This study has constructed a comprehensive, actionable framework for producing foreign-language videos that effectively communicate Chinese modernization. By analyzing successful content across ecological, economic, political, cultural, and social domains, we have identified and systematized core production strategies: leveraging Emotional Universality to forge human connections, employing Multi-modal Synergy to build cross-cultural symbolic bridges, anchoring narratives in the tangible Lively Presence of everyday life, ensuring Demand Orientation through useful and engaging content, and underpinning all efforts with the creative Subjectivity Consciousness derived from genuine cultural confidence.

This integrated model transcends the limitations of traditional, didactic international communication. It represents a paradigm shift from monologue to dialogue, from policy explanation to value sharing, and from creating awareness to fostering understanding. The proposed strategies collectively function as an organic ecosystem, as visualized in the conceptual framework, where cultural confidence provides the foundational ethos,

content methodologies translate themes into relatable stories, and technical execution delivers them through a universally resonant audio-visual language.

The ultimate objective of this approach is not merely to increase China's media footprint but to facilitate genuine cross-cultural dialogue. By transforming the abstract concept of "Chinese modernization" into perceptible experiences of shared human values—beauty, progress, family, and sustainability—this framework aims to build cognitive and emotional bridges. It offers creators a practical blueprint to craft narratives that can navigate the complex global media landscape, counter preconceived biases, and move international audiences from passive viewing to active engagement and deeper appreciation. In doing so, it serves the greater goal of fostering a more balanced and empathetic global discourse in the digital age.

Author Contributions

H.L.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing—original draft preparation; Y.C.: Data Collection, Data Curation, Validation, Writing—Original Draft; T.H.: Visualization, Investigation, Data Curation; X.C.: Software, Visualization, Investigation; T.Z.: Software, Validation, Resources; M.W.: Data, Curation, Writing—Proofreading; D.Y.: Supervision, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition, Writing—Reviewing and Editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This paper was funded by 2024 National-level College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project (JWXC2024077), 2024 Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project of WZU(JWXC2024077), and Zhejiang Foreign Language Society Project (ZWYB2023023).

Institutional Review Board Statement

This study analyzed publicly available, anonymized data (e.g., user comments from short-video platforms). As the research involved no interaction with human subjects and presented minimal risk to the subjects, it was granted an exemption from full ethical review and approval. All data were aggregated at the stage of analysis.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Our analysis is based on data gathered from openly accessible videos circulating on social media platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and YouTube through their official APIs.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Abbas, M. (2023). Layered modernity: A new framework for reading Chinese digital narratives. *The China Quarterly*, 235, 789–807. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741X2300026>.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Vol. 1). University of Minnesota Press.

Cheng, S., & Yu, G. (2022). Hedonic and eudaimonic feelings: The construction of an "express train" model in cross-cultural communication—An analysis based on comments on Li Ziqi's short videos. *Journalism Research*, (5), 36–49+119. <https://doi.org/10.20050/j.cnki.xwdx.2022.05.004>.

Dornyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(3), 273–284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02042.x>.

Hofstede, G. (2003). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*. Sage Publications.

Harvey, D. (2020). *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles: Spatial Fix in the Digital Age*. Pluto Press.

Hong, W., Jiang, Y., Wen, R., Chen, W., Lou, N., Deng, J., Li, J., Li, H., & Ye, D. (2024). Strategies for Video Producers to Tell Their Good Stories Under the 5W Model of Communication. *Journal of Educational Technology and Innovation* 6(1), 50–66. <https://doi.org/10.61414/jeti.v6i1.171>.

Hu, Z. L. (2007). Cross-disciplinary trend in linguistic studies. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 39(6), 403–408. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-0429.2007.06.001>.

Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & Boyd, D. (2023). *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Decade in Review* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Routledge.

Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2021). *Multimodal Discourse Analysis: New Methods for New Media* (3rd ed.). Bloomsbury.

Thompson, M. (2022). *Digitizing Tradition: The “Programmability” of Cultural Heritage*. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/14666.001.0001>.

Zhao, Y. (2022). *Digital Nationalism in China: Everyday Narratives on Short-Video Platforms*. Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/zhao20524>.

Zhang, D. L. (2009). On A Synthetic Theoretical Framework for Multimodal Discourse Analysis. *Foreign Languages in China*, 6(1), 24–30. <https://doi.org/10.13564/j.cnki.issn.1672-9382.2009.01.004>.