Original Paper

A Study on the Video Communication Strategies of the "China-Russia Headlines" Account on VK Platform from the Perspective of Framing Theory

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Abstract

As the global landscape undergoes profound changes, it is urgent to reconstruct the international communication structure. In recent years, China-Russia relations have continued to improve, and the need to enhance the cultural export mechanism has become increasingly apparent. VKontakte, a major Russian local social media platform, plays a significant role in communication with Russian audiences. This study examines the top VK account China-Russia Headlines (CRH) and applies Zang's three-tier framing theory to analyze its communication strategies. The findings reveal that the framing features include diverse subjects, authoritative sources, and a mainstream narrative tone at the macro level; the narratives tend to be conservative, structurally uniform, and short in length at the meso level; the discourse is rhetorically rich with prominent Chinese cultural symbols at the micro level. However, the account still faces challenges such as significant variations in view counts and limited audience interaction. To enhance the efficacy of China's international communication, this study proposes prioritizing audience-relevant content, integrating multidisciplinary themes, diversifying presentation formats, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords

China-Russia Headlines, Framing Theory, New Media Platform, Cross-cultural Communication

On May 31, 2021, Chinese President Xi emphasized during the 30th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee that telling China's stories well, spreading China's voice, and presenting a real, three-dimensional, and comprehensive image of China are crucial tasks for enhancing the country's international communication capabilities. In the current era of rapidly developing new media technologies and increasingly intense international public opinion, it is of great significance to build influential and communicative new media platforms to vividly present Chinese culture and enhance the national image within cross-cultural contexts. As early as 2017, the "China-Russia Headlines: Important News" account (hereinafter referred to as "China-Russia Headlines (CRH)") was launched on Russia's VKontakte (VK) platform, co-developed by China Media Group (CMG) and the international news agency Russia Today (RT). With over 700,000 followers, it ranks among the top tier of Chinese cultural outreach efforts in Russia. It has become an important medium for Russian audiences to hear China's voice and a model of cross-cultural communication practices by China's mainstream media on foreign social platforms.

1. Research Background

The friendly relations between China and Russia have a deep historical foundation, and close exchanges between the two countries have become an inevitable trend under the wave of globalization. As the largest country along the Belt and Road Initiative, Russia actively responds to the vision of a "Community with a Shared Future for Humanity". In recent years, with the deepening of China-Russia relations, bilateral interactions in the political and economic spheres have grown increasingly frequent. Cultural cooperation has reached new heights, marked by initiatives such as the "Year of China-Russia Scientific and Technological Innovation", the "Year of China-Russia Media Exchange", and the "Year of China-Russia Cultural Exchange". Against this backdrop, the Russian public has shown growing interest in the profound and time-honored Chinese culture, and the reach and influence of China's cultural communication with Russia have steadily expanded.

Social media helps enhance the sense of affinity and identification in international communication, extend its coverage, and improve a country's global image, making it an essential arena for cross-cultural communication (Luan, 2012). With the advent of 5G networks and the AI era, the rise of new media platforms has brought new opportunities for China-Russia cultural exchange. According to a 2023 survey conducted by the All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center, Russian citizens spend an average of 4.5 hours per day browsing social media, with VK platform usage leading all platforms at an average of 129 minutes per day. Notably, 77% of users prefer subscribing to news content (MOSCOW, 2023). VK, established in 2006, has users mainly from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and other countries. It is the largest tech company in Russia in terms of user base, with more than 95% of Russian internet users registered on the platform. As of February 2025, Similarweb data shows that VK attracts

around 100 million monthly visits, making it the largest social network in Europe (Similarweb, 2025). According to Mediaskope, VK surpassed YouTube in monthly coverage in Russia by December 2024 (VKCO, 2024). Therefore, Russia has fertile ground for new media-based cultural communication.

The CRH account on VK is based on a mobile multimedia application jointly developed by China and Russia in 2017 and co-operated by China Media Group and RT (People's Daily Online, 2017). This platform symbolizes the cooperation between Chinese and Russian mainstream media in the new media era. To promote mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, it integrates resources from both countries to facilitate multidimensional and cooperative communication. As of March 1, 2025, the account had reached 717,000 followers and has become a crucial channel for disseminating China's voice in Russia.

In 1973, sociologist Goffman proposed the concept of framing in his seminal work Frame Analysis. He argued that frames are cognitive structures people use to perceive and interpret the external world. Individuals rely on specific frameworks to organize, generalize, and explain their lived experiences (Xiao, 2010). In the field of communication studies, Taiwanese scholar Zang further localized Goffman's framework theory by proposing a three-tier framing model, suggesting that the communication process can be analyzed through macro-, meso-, and micro-level frames. The macro-level frame refers to the definition and construction of core themes or events. The meso-level frame focuses on narrative structure and format, including strategies such as storytelling structure, narrative genre, attitudinal stance, and frequency. The micro-level frame involves language and symbolic usage, including rhetorical devices, stylistic features, and textual techniques. The CRH account has been operating on Russia's VK platform for over a decade, gradually forming a relatively stable pattern of cultural communication. Therefore, Zang's three-tier framework provides a useful analytical lens for understanding how Chinese imagery is constructed and communicated through its videos. This study applies the framework theory to analyze the video content posted by the account, identifying framing strategies across three levels to explore its overall video communication logic and effectiveness.

2. Materials and Methods

The CRH account publishes content in various formats, including videos, articles, and images, featuring both short-form videos and livestreams. As of March 1, 2025, the account had posted over 8,000 videos and more than 1,300 articles. Given the dominant role of video content, analyzing its structure and communication effect can shed light on the effectiveness of China's mainstream media in cross-cultural communication with Russia. This study focuses on videos published by the account on VK between January 1, 2024, and February 20, 2025. A total of 1,039 valid video samples were collected via web scraping. Each sample was analyzed for its title, theme, duration, and view count. To

better explore the account's framing strategies and cross-cultural communication mechanisms, this study uses Zang's three-tier framework model, applying methods such as word frequency analysis, categorical coding, and data processing to examine the video content across macro, meso, and micro levels.
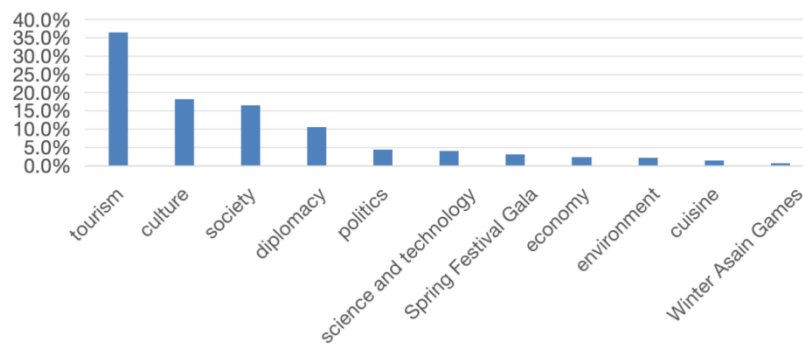
3. Results

3.1 Macro-Level Framing

Macro-level framing primarily manifests in the definition of the event's central theme and the thematic presentation within news coverage. Such framing exerts a maximal influence on the audience's perception of the reporting subject. This study selects video themes, video sources, and video tonality as the focal points for analysis, thereby examining the portrayal of China at a macro-level frame.

3.1.1 Video Themes: Emphasis on Soft Communication

According to Van Dijk, every linguistic text structure contains a salient theme. The theme constitutes the core of the news, determining its central message, selection of materials, and language use. Hence, this paper chooses theme analysis as the entry point for framing analysis. The 1,039 video samples were categorized into nine major thematic domains, ranked by their proportion as follows: Culture, Tourism, Society, Diplomacy, Politics, Technology, Economy, Environment, and Cuisine. Within each domain, specific event clusters can be further identified.

Figure 1. Video Themes

The results reveal that Tourism and Culture dominate in terms of quantity and length, accounting for 36.4% (378 videos) and 18.3% (190 videos) of the total sample, respectively. These two themes contribute to the "softening" of previously rigid and stereotypical images by presenting content characterized by affinity, vitality, and novelty. They comprehensively showcase tourism resources and portray cultural features from multiple perspectives, emphasizing emotional resonance and everyday

relevance. This approach achieves an effective "soft communication" narrative that tells China's story in a relatable and engaging manner. Besides, it shows that the Tourism category constitutes the main content of the CRH videos. This segment primarily shares videos of natural landscapes, highlighting diverse regional scenery and folk customs across China. Unlike Russia's predominantly continental climate, China's geographic configuration exhibits a more varied combination of climatic and geomorphological features, ranging from Harbin in Northeast China to subtropical coastal areas, from the glaciers and permafrost of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to expansive coastal plains. China's rich and unique natural resources attract Russian audiences. Moreover, the channel synchronizes natural scenery presentations with the current season, including peonies blooming in spring, fish playing among lotus leaves in summer, bountiful harvests in autumn, and frost and rime in winter, eliciting emotional resonance among viewers. The Culture theme centers on China's traditional cultural heritage, highlighting national characteristics and sharing cultural achievements. It encompasses over twenty types of traditional cultural treasures, including Chinese painting, paper-cutting, traditional craftsmanship, martial arts, ancient poetry, folk festivals, dance, and opera, showcasing the unique charm of folk arts. Beyond traditional cultural subjects, the videos also feature developments in contemporary Chinese popular culture. Additionally, eighteen videos illustrate cultural exchanges and integration between China and foreign countries, reflecting the inclusive spirit of contemporary China.

Table 1. "Tourism" and "Culture" Categories and Event Clusters

Category Construction	Content Type	Video Title
Tourism	Seasonal Landscapes	*The Great Wall in Colorful Autumn Attire*
	Water Landscapes	*Hukou Waterfall: Streams and Rainbows*
	Wildlife Ecology	*Sichuan Welcomes Wintering Swans*
	Hidden Wonders	*Majestic Danxia Landform of Xinjiang Grand Canyon*
	Photographic Perspectives	*Time-lapse Captures the Moment Water Lilies Bloom*
	Urban Architecture	*Phoenix Light Spectacle in Xi'an's Night Sky*
Culture	Intangible Heritage	*Paper Cutting: A Millennia-Old Chinese Art*
	Stage Performance	*Tibetan Tap Dance*
	Festival Celebration	*China Central Television Spring Festival Gala*
	Tradition Meets Modernity	*Musician Plays Modern Songs on*

		Ancient Chime Bells
	Museum Restoration	*Preserving History: The Art of Restoration*
	Classical Poetry	*Immortal Verses: The Poems of Du Fu*

3.1.2 Video Sources: Predominance of Official Media Reposts

Video sources, defined as the entities responsible for video creation, significantly influence the selection of content and stylistic orientation, thereby shaping the overall tone of the videos. Analysis of the 1,039 video samples reveals three primary categories of sources.

First, approximately 70% of the videos are reposted from official media outlets, including central media organizations such as CGTN Russian Channel, CMG Local Headquarters, and CCTV News. This official sourcing ensures that the CRH platform disseminates the most representative Chinese voices on overseas media platforms. Notably, CGTN Russian Channel targets Russian-speaking audiences with videos featuring Russian language narration, Russian-speaking anchors, or Russian participants. Second, a portion of the videos originates from new media accounts, supplementing the official media content. These are mainly reposted from platforms such as Lizhi Video, Farmer Channel, and Pear Video, offering more flexible and diverse content presentation that highlights natural landscapes or aspects of everyday cultural life. Third, a small number of videos are self-produced by the CRH project itself. These videos employ a data journalism format to present China's development status by combining Russian-language data visualizations, explanatory texts, and video imagery, achieving precise point-to-point communication effectiveness.

A comprehensive analysis of these three video sources indicates that the CRH video samples combine macro-level positioning with targeted dissemination. Compared to official media, new media and self-produced videos tend to be more engaging and entertaining; relative to new media, official and self-produced videos are more closely aligned with Russian audience preferences. Comparative data further shows that self-produced videos, which balance both engagement and audience relevance, generally achieve higher view counts.

3.1.3 Video Tonality: Focus on Mainstream Narratives

Articulating the mainstream narrative on overseas media platforms to showcase a refreshed image to broad international audiences constitutes a crucial content tone in global communication. Economic development, political dialogue, diplomatic interactions, technological innovation, and environmental protection form the core components of the CRH video series, playing a foundational role in shaping China's international image, conveying its official positions, and presenting its national identity. The results reveal that videos with a primary focus on political and diplomatic themes demonstrate notable dissemination effectiveness within Russian audiences. For example, highly viewed samples include

"General Secretary Calls for a Fair World of Common Development at the G20" (views: 1,247,819), "Maria Zakharova's Memories of China" (views: 1,187,802), "Xi Jinping Holds Talks with Peruvian President" (views: 1,129,996), "Xi Jinping Meets Putin" (views: 416,155), and "Promoting the 'Shanghai Spirit': Actions of the SCO" (views: 109,518), all ranking among the top ten by viewership. Russian audiences not only pay close attention to Sino-Russian bilateral relations but also show strong interest in China's performance on the international stage, with forums such as the G20 Summit and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) receiving widespread attention.

Further thematic analysis reveals distinct focal points that collectively compose a contemporary panorama of China's development. Under the environmental theme, emphasis is placed on Eastern wisdom regarding harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, showcasing China's responsible leadership role in global environmental governance. The economic theme highlights regional economic development as a microcosm, illustrating China's high-quality economic growth in the new era and underscoring China's powerful momentum as a global engine for sustainable development. The technological theme accentuates the empowerment of traditional industries through new productive forces, demonstrating China's efforts to build a globally leading technological industrial chain. The political theme presents the practice of whole-process people's democracy, articulating China's model of modern political civilization. The diplomatic theme emphasizes the friendly bilateral relations between China and Russia. It adopts the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity as a value orientation to address new challenges in the era of globalization.

Figure 2. Mainstream Discourse Word Cloud

3.2 Meso-Level Framing

Zang conceptualizes meso-level framing as the structural form of news events. It involves situating the thematic content of each news report within the broader framework of the event, thereby clarifying the comprehensive narrative strategies, including narrative techniques, structures, and genres.

3.2.1 Narrative Techniques: Generally Conservative, Aligned with Thematic Style

Compared with textual content, video media offers more diverse narrative possibilities. The CRH account adopts a hybrid approach by integrating multiple narrative techniques across visual presentation, sound design, video editing, and thematic expression. While videos under the same theme tend to share similar narrative styles, this study selects the most-viewed and representative video samples under six major themes, including tourism, culture, technology, society, politics, and diplomacy, for detailed analysis.

The selected video samples are as follows:

(1) A Dragon-Shaped Tide in the Qiantang River (В реке Цяньтан приливная волна создала «дракона»);

(2) Russian Girls in Intricate Chinese Paper-Cut Dresses: China's Intangible Cultural Heritage (Девушки из России в резных бумажных нарядах из Китая—нематериальное культурное наследие Китая);

(3) AI Anchor Alena-Nana Explores Outer Space (Video by Алена Nana);

(4) A 70-Year-Old Chinese Man Rescues a Drowning Child in Time (70-летний китаец оперативно спас ребенка из воды)；

(5) Xi Jinping Calls for Building a Fair World of Common Development at the G20 Summit (Си Цзиньпин на саммите G20 призвал к построению справедливого мира общего развития);

(6) Maria Zakharova Shares Her Memories of Life in China (Мария Захарова поделилась воспоминаниями о жизни в Китае).

These videos received 46,273; 136,143; 353,633; 40,240; 1,247,819; and 1,187,802 views, respectively.

Table 2. Theme Classification and Narrative Techniques

Theme Category		Leisure-oriented themes			Formal themes		
		Tourism	Culture	Technology	Society	Politics	Diplomacy
Visual Representation	Color Tone	Warm Tone	Chinese Red	Aerospace Blue	News Tone	News Tone	News Tone
	Scenery Shot	Aerial Long Shot	Wide + Close Shot	Wide + Close Shot	Static Camera	Static Camera	Static Camera
	Composition	Rule of Thirds	Symmetry	Rule of Thirds	Rule of Thirds	Center Composition	Center Composition
Voice Design	Voice	None	None	AI Voice	Natural Interview	Speaker	Speaker
	Background Music	Folk Music	Folk Music	Sci-Fi Music	Pop Music	None	None
	Sound Effect	Dragon Roar	Applause	Mechanical Sound	None	None	None
Video Editing	Duration	15–30s	30–60s	1–2min	15–30s	30–60s	3min+
	Format	Vertical	Horizontal	Horizontal	Vertical	Vertical	Vertical
	Editing Frequency	Fast	Fast	Fast	Moderate	Moderate	No Editing
Text Theme	Subtitle	None	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Title	None	Yes	Yes	None	None	None
	Annotation	None	Yes	Yes	None	None	None

Overall, the narrative techniques employed in the CRH videos can be characterized as relatively conservative. In terms of post-production, the videos are generally short and feature rapid editing. This fast-paced narrative strategy facilitates efficient information delivery within a limited timeframe, enhances narrative engagement, and increases the dynamism of the content. In terms of visual language, the videos incorporate a variety of shot types, including panoramic, medium-close, and close-up shots. Each serves a distinct function: panoramic shots offer intuitive visual overviews, medium-close shots capture scene details, and close-ups emphasize emotional expression. In terms of auditory language, the videos alternate between synchronous sound, voice-over narration, background music, and sound effects, thereby enhancing the visual impact and enriching the narrative layering. Textual elements, such as Russian-language titles, subtitles, and annotations, are relatively concise and serve to clarify video content and reinforce the overarching narrative themes.

Moreover, to align with the stylistic demands of different thematic categories, the narrative techniques vary significantly across content types. Entertainment-oriented content emphasizes sensory stimulation, while more serious themes prioritize informational efficiency, achieving a balance between communication effectiveness and audience experience. In videos related to tourism, culture, and technology, the narrative is characterized by vibrant color schemes, diverse camera angles, dynamic camera movements, pronounced background music, and rich sound effects conveying a lighthearted and lively tone. Conversely, in videos dealing with social issues, politics, and diplomacy, audiences tend to prefer content that is clear, authoritative, and structurally coherent. These videos typically feature neutral color palettes, emphasize medium-close shots of key individuals, maintain orderly composition, present clear vocal narration, and avoid background sound effects.

3.2.2 Narrative Structure: Coexistence of Linear and Nonlinear Modes to Stimulate Audience Engagement

Narrative modes of event reporting can be broadly categorized into linear and nonlinear structures. Linear narratives typically follow a chronological sequence, including beginning, development, climax, and conclusion, and include forms such as progressive (step-by-step) narration and central-thread narration. For instance, the video "A Dragon-Shaped Tide in the Qiantang River" employs a stepwise progressive structure, adhering to a temporal sequence to depict the flowing process of the tide, ultimately forming a dragon-shaped landform. In addition, "All for the People: Chinese Leader Draws Inspiration from His Father" exhibits a central-thread narrative, where memories of the father serve as the main axis, linking together childhood events and third-party commentary to construct a coherent storyline.

In contrast, nonlinear narratives abandon strict chronological progression and instead utilize techniques such as flashbacks and interjections to piece together events. This fragmented narrative style expands the space for meaning-making and often manifests as looped, modular, or scattered structures. For example, "A Russian Conductor's First Experience Playing the Chinese Bamboo Flute" adopts a circular narrative: it begins and ends with scenes of flute playing, while inserting interview clips of the conductor in between, thereby creating strong recall points for the viewer. In "Boy Studies Sugar Painting for 13 Years", a modular narrative structure is applied by alternating between the creation of two sugar paintings (one brown and one blue), visually conveying each step of the traditional folk art in a more accessible way. Scattered narrative structure breaks down spatial or temporal continuity, as seen in "Woman Knocks on Doors One by One After Detecting Fire", where the narrative switches back and forth between the early and advanced stages of the fire, between interior and exterior scenes, and between the perspectives of dense smoke and emergency escape, heightening narrative tension. In sum, the CRH project flexibly adopts diverse narrative structures, selecting the form most appropriate for each video's thematic focus. These strategic choices help to quickly capture audience attention and

elicit emotional resonance within the constraints of short-form video.

Table 3. Representative Narrative Structures and Samples

Narrative Style	Representative Sample
Stepwise Progressive	A Dragon-Shaped Tide in the Qiantang River
Central-Thread	All for the People: Chinese Leader Draws Inspiration from His Father
Circular Narrative	A Russian Conductor's First Experience Playing the Chinese Bamboo Flute
Modular Narrative	Boy Studies Sugar Painting for 13 Years
Scattered Narrative	Woman Knocks on Doors One by One After Detecting Fire

3.2.3 Narrative Length: Dominated by short videos, capitalizing on the traffic dividends

In the current media landscape, video content is generally categorized by length: short-form videos (< 5 minutes), medium-form (5-30 minutes), and long-form (30+minutes). Audiences' comprehension and perception of news content vary with video duration. The results reveal that CRH primarily utilizes short-form video to present China's image. Among the total sample, there are 870 short videos, 152 medium-length videos, and 18 long videos. Short videos predominantly cover engaging and culturally rich topics within the cultural and social domains. Examples include "Girl Playing with Penguin" (Девочка забавляется с пингвином) and "Chinese Math Teacher Teaches Students to Dance" (Китайский учитель математики учит учеников танцевать). This aligns with the broader global media ecosystem, where short-form content not only defines platforms like TikTok but also serves as a major traffic driver across various social media platforms. In the current streaming era, short videos offer a compelling means of conveying targeted messages within limited time frames, catering to audiences' fragmented entertainment needs. The CRH account effectively capitalizes on the global short-video boom, leveraging platform algorithm mechanisms to capture traffic dividends. It emphasizes the production and distribution of short-form content with high interactivity and fragmentation, thereby opening new channels for outbound communication. These efforts contribute to establishing a stable stream of cultural dissemination, facilitating the international outreach of Chinese culture via dynamic and accessible short video formats.

3.3 Micro-Level Framing

Micro-level frames are primarily manifested through language and symbols, including syntactic structures, rhetorical devices, and discursive styles. These elements influence the audience's perception of news reports on a micro level and subtly shape their value orientations.

3.3.1 Video Titles: Skillful Use of Rhetorical Strategies

In news reporting, integrating journalistic writing with literary techniques, including blending factual accuracy with artistic expression, can enhance the expressiveness, emotional appeal, and interest of the news content (Chen, P. & Chen, Q. H., 2022). As a literary device, rhetoric can communicate discursive intentions and improve communication effectiveness in news discourse. The CRH account frequently employs rhetorical strategies such as quotation, rhetorical questions, metaphor, and exclamation in its video titles. Examples include: "I remember the beautiful moments on the Tibetan Plateau", "Why must one visit China this spring?", "A hidden current forms a 'dragon' in Qiantan River", and "A stunning painting!" Appropriate rhetorical embellishments in titles can stimulate imagination, arouse curiosity, offer visual cues, and convey emotions, thus increasing click-through rates before viewing and enhancing memorability afterward, effectively contributing to external communication with Russian audiences.

3.3.2 Video Content: Effective Use of Chinese Symbols

Symbols are perceptions that carry meaning and serve as key vehicles for conveying meaning in cross-cultural communication. According to Saussure, a symbol is a composite of the signifier and the signified; the signifier being the perceptual form and the signified the abstract concept it represents. Their interconnection forms the basis of a shared cultural understanding (Saussure, 2017). Based on this theory, this study summarizes and analyzes the symbolic system across 1,039 videos from the CRH account.

Table 4. Analysis of Representative Symbols of China

Symbol Type	Representative Symbols	Signified Meaning
Natural Symbols	Panda, Penguin, Dolphin, Dove	Peace & Friendship, Harmonious Coexistence
	Tulip, Cactus, Lotus, Magnolia	Beautiful Symbolism, Ecological Protection
Regional Symbols	Xinjiang, Xizang, Guangxi	Ethnic Unity, Pluralistic Coexistence
	Shanghai, Hangzhou, Beijing, Chengdu	Modern Metropolis, Livable Cities
	Mount Everest, Changbai Mountain, Salt Lake	Natural Resources, Tourism Resources
Social Symbols	Children, Elderly, Hearing-impaired	Social Security, Care for Vulnerable Groups
	Doctors, Migrant Workers, Police,	Professional Dedication,

	Teachers	Everyday Heroes
	Floods, Torrential Rains, Earthquakes	United as One, Institutional Superiority
Cultural Symbols	Paper-cutting, Traditional Painting, Peking Opera, Folk Music	Cultural Confidence, Heritage Preservation
	Qingming Festival, Spring Festival, Ancient Poetry	Cultural Roots, Traditional Values
	Great Wall, Old Summer Palace, Forbidden City	Civilizational Continuity, National Spirit
Economic Symbols	Drones, AI, Electric Vehicles	Technological Innovation, High-quality Development
	High-speed Rail, Made in China	National Brand, Infrastructure Strength
	Poverty Alleviation, Rural Modernization	Common Prosperity, Livelihood Improvement
Political Symbols	CIIE, BRICS, SCO	Opening-up, Major-country Responsibility
	People's Stability, Deepening Reforms, Chinese Wisdom	Civilizational Dialogue, Solution Contributions

The visual symbols presented in the videos strongly reflect the image of China. Through specific symbols, viewers form associative concepts that collectively construct a modern Chinese image characterized by vast natural landscapes, diverse regional features, harmonious communities, and a booming economy. The recurring use of such symbols reinforces these associated concepts, thus playing a crucial role in shaping Russian audiences' perceptions of China.

4. Discussion

An analysis of the three-level narrative framework reveals that the CRH account has established a relatively mature content publishing system. However, the video data still exhibits significant volatility and low engagement. First, view counts fluctuate widely, ranging from over 1,000 to over 1 million per video, an inconsistency considering the account's follower base of over 700,000. Second, engagement rates remain low, with most videos receiving only a few or no comments, and the highest number of shares barely exceeding 20. Further investigation reveals the following key issues in the dissemination of video content on the CRH account: First, the themes covered are broad, and the account lacks clear positioning. Although the account benefits from CMG's extensive media resources, this also results in

content redundancy. Notably, there is significant thematic overlap across videos, leading to viewer fatigue. For example, many re-posted videos from Litchi Video focus on floral time-lapse photography, which generally attracts low viewership. Moreover, the variety of content formats, ranging from news commentary and aerial footage to personal interviews, makes it difficult to establish a consistent stylistic identity, hindering the account's ability to foster long-term viewer loyalty among Russian audiences.

Second, the heavy reliance on official media sources has led to a singular narrative perspective, making it difficult to achieve cross-cultural resonance from the "others'" point of view. While the account plays a key role in mainstream narrative dissemination, its propagandistic tone may feel tedious. Additionally, the videos are primarily in Chinese. Although CGTN Russian and some self-produced content include Russian subtitles, the prevalence of untranslated Chinese text and spoken Mandarin increases the cognitive barrier for Russian viewers, further discouraging engagement.

Third, in terms of format, the account overwhelmingly prioritizes short videos, while mid- and long-form content is underrepresented. While short videos are compact and engaging, and have become a popular format in the digital era, they are insufficient to showcase China's rich history and cultural depth fully. This results in a loss of nuanced information. In terms of structure, the narratives remain relatively simplistic. Scholars have noted a positive correlation between the number of journalistic elements and the completeness of a narrative (Zang, 1999). Moreover, much of the content consists of re-posted material, with limited original reporting. The account tends to focus on studio-based commentary, with a lack of deep-dive segments such as live reports, on-the-ground interviews, or street vox pops, all of which could enhance interactivity and authenticity.

Currently, the videos on CRH are categorized clearly but tend to remain thematically isolated. Some experimental segments have shown promising results. For example, the five videos featuring the AI-generated virtual host "Alyosha Nana" all surpassed 15,000 views. Building on this success, future content should explore thematic integration, using emerging AI technologies to breathe new life into traditional culture and create regionally tailored IPs that appeal to Russian audiences. Content strategies should shift from quantity to quality by localizing narratives, avoiding direct content transfer, and instead customizing material for the Russian market. For instance, with the recent surge in Russian tourism to Sanya, content could combine local scenic resources with regional cultural elements, simultaneously promoting tourism and cultural understanding. The current over-reliance on national media sources has led to a narrow thematic range. To address this, content production should draw from both mainstream Chinese media and independent creators, while fostering bilateral institutional cooperation. Collaboration between Chinese and Russian media, such as between Chinese state outlets and Russian platforms like RT or local influencers, could help blend the self-represented narrative with a receptive outsider's perspective.

In addition, shared cultural values can help bridge emotional distances. Currently, most videos focus on traditional topics that may feel removed from viewers' everyday lives. For example, "How to Make a Lantern" is likely to be more engaging than simply showcasing "Lantern Designs". Interactive cultural events, livestreams, and topic-based campaigns should be introduced to make Chinese culture "come alive" in Russian social spaces. Moreover, video editing and translation should aim for clarity and familiarity, adding colloquial Russian annotations and reducing excessive Chinese-language content to lower entry barriers. Videos with emotional appeal that resonate with Russian values are particularly effective. Given the shared values of mutual aid, patriotism, and selflessness between Chinese and Russian cultures, the account should publish more videos that showcase collective assistance and community spirit. Emotional connectivity can build psychological bridges and drive resonance, amplifying the overall impact of cross-cultural communication.

Last, due to differences in language, history, and cultural background, China's cultural exports often face a "cultural discount". This necessitates the development of content with greater depth in both form and substance. First, the account should produce long-form, well-planned videos that provide comprehensive, multi-angle portrayals of specific topics. This would enable systematic storytelling and more effectively present a holistic image of modern China to deepen Russian audiences' understanding. Second, content should incorporate modern cultural trends, such as rock music, historical dramas, or high-speed rail innovations and Olympic achievements, to broaden the spectrum of cultural narratives. Blending traditional and contemporary elements can help craft Chinese stories that resonate with Russian viewers. Finally, thematic campaigns could be launched around specific timeframes or events. For example, the Spring Festival Gala or the Asian Winter Games, anchored in traditional festivals or international events, can serve as windows to showcase contemporary China through the interplay of past and present.

5. Conclusions

As one of the earliest accounts established under the initiative of China's cultural outreach to Russia, CRH presents the modernization of Chinese society through a wide range of themes. It employs diverse narrative techniques and rhetorical strategies, integrating distinctive Chinese symbols to attract the interest of Russian audiences. Drawing upon framing theory, this study finds that, rooted in its state media background, CRH has become a key channel for official communication with Russian audiences. Although its content aligns with mainstream discourses, it often lacks proximity and audience relevance. While the account covers a broad array of topics, it also suffers from content homogenization. Over the years, it has developed a stable narrative tone, relying on fast-paced, fragmented short videos to tell Chinese stories, yet remains deficient in in-depth, high-quality productions. Entertaining video titles and culturally symbolic visuals continue to draw in Russian

viewers, but problems such as inadequate Russian subtitles and translations persist. These issues reflect broader challenges in China's cross-cultural communication with Russia.

In the era of new media, international communication faces both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges. Promoting China's national image through cross-cultural dissemination on new media platforms requires integrating the state media's grand narratives with personal "meta-narratives". This entails understanding audiences' basic emotional needs and producing content that is emotionally resonant, rich in form, and of high cultural value. Enhancing the appeal and influence of Chinese media accounts targeting Russian audiences depends on continuously refining communication strategies, exploring innovative dissemination paths, and expanding the boundaries of international communication. Only by doing so can China truly seize discursive power amid the profound global transformations of our time.

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