HiLL PUBLISHING

Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science, 2025, 9(1), 45-51
https://www.hillpublisher.com/journals/jhass/
ISSN Online: 2576-0548
ISSN Print: 2576-0556

Exploring the Dissemination Effectiveness of *Wolf Totem*

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How to cite this paper: Yan Zhao. (2025) Exploring the Dissemination Effectiveness of *Wolf Totem*. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, 9(1), 45-51.
DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2025.01.007

Received: December 22, 2024
Accepted: January 19, 2025
Published: February 18, 2025

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Abstract

Wolf Totem is Jiang Rong's representative work. Since its publication in 2004, it has won widespread praise from readers at home and abroad for its profound themes, exciting storylines, and delicate character portrayal. The whole book tells the story of the lives of Inner Mongolian grassland nomads in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the stories between herders and grassland wolves, from the perspective of Chen Zhen, the grassland-educated youth who cut through the queue. It demonstrates the author's profound understanding of grassland ecology and the wolf spirit. Its excellent communication strategy, including precise market positioning, multi-channel promotion, and cultural compatibility with international readers, has successfully conveyed the charm of contemporary Chinese literature to the world. *Wolf Totem* has not only been reprinted many times in Chinese Mainland but also translated into many languages. It has been issued in many countries and regions around the world and has become a bright card of Chinese contemporary literature. An in-depth analysis of the dissemination effect of *Wolf Totem* reveals its unique strengths in promotion strategies, cultural fit, and international expression. These experiences undoubtedly have important reference significance for enhancing the influence of contemporary Chinese literary works and promoting the "going global" of Chinese culture.

Keywords

Wolf Totem; the dissemination effectiveness; exploration

1. Introduction

Communication effectiveness, as one of the core concepts in the field of communication studies, refers to the ability and effectiveness of information to be transmitted through specific channels and influence audience cognition, attitudes, and behavioral changes. The rapid development of information technology, the diversification of communication media, and the complexity of communication environments have made the study of communication effectiveness increasingly important. As the terminal link of the communication process, "Effect" emphasizes the result that information produces for the audience (Harold Lasswell, 2013). As research deepens, the connotation of communication effectiveness gradually enriches, not only focusing on direct effects but also expanding to multiple dimensions such as long-term impact and social impact. The communication effects from short-term to long-term, from individual to social levels, expanding the research on communication effects (David McQuail, 2006). Firstly, how information is noticed, understood, and remembered by the audience from a cognitive perspective, is very crucial for evaluating communication effectiveness (John C. Kuhlthau, 1993). Secondly, studying the influence of opinion leaders on audience attitudes from an attitude perspective, we should emphasize the role of observational learning in behavior change from a behavioral perspective (Elihu Katz & Paul Lazarsfeld, 1995). Thirdly, we should analyze how media

shapes public opinion and social culture from a social perspective (Noam Chomsky & Edward S. Herman, 2011). In China, Guo Mingquan published the book *Communication Power* in 2006. The book focuses on how companies can utilize media communication power, triggering academic thinking and research on media communication power, extending from the influence of media and audience attention to the communication power of media (Mingquan Guo, 2006). Obviously, significant achievements have been made in the study of domestic communication effectiveness in various aspects such as new media, integration of traditional and new media, and cross-cultural communication. And then short videos play an important role in the era of integrated media, and the improvement of their dissemination effectiveness needs to start from multiple aspects such as content innovation, channel optimization, and audience interaction (Chao Wang, 2021). Therefore, emphasizing the importance of secondary dissemination after live streaming; believing that by describing the live streaming process, sales, and activity objectives, the influence of live streaming can be further expanded (Yanyan Zhao & Ping Zhang, 2021). Then, using the theory of additive partial order set to establish an evaluation method for the communication power of the WeChat official account, can provide a scientific and objective communication power evaluation tool for the We Media team (Zhiyong Mao, Yu Pang, & Lizhu Yue, 2021). Eventually, by reviewing the current research status of the evaluation system for international communication effectiveness of domestic media and proposed suggestions for constructing an evaluation system, we can enhance the international communication effectiveness of Chinese media (Sixiang Fan, 2017). Obviously, research on the effectiveness of dissemination both domestically and internationally has shown initial results, but there are still many problems and challenges. With the continuous advancement of technology and changes in the media environment, research on the effectiveness of dissemination will become more in-depth and refined, providing strong support for enhancing the dissemination power and influence of contemporary literary works. In the future, efforts need to continue in this field in order to achieve more accurate and efficient dissemination and enhance China's cultural soft power.

2. Exploration of the Dissemination Effectiveness of *Wolf Totem*

2.1 Accurate Dissemination

Foreign translation should follow a market-oriented operating mechanism, and fully understand and adapt to the expectations and perspectives of target readers. In the translation of literary works, repetitive and preachy content should be deleted as much as possible and certain details should be reduced (Xudong Jiang, 2023). Therefore, the importance of text translation as a bridge for conveying the content and style of the original work is self-evident in the study of communication effectiveness. It not only concerns the accuracy and efficiency of information transmission but also the precision of cultural exchange and understanding. In the translation of *Wolf Totem*, Professor Howard Goldblatt not only conducted a thorough analysis of the original text but also used the target language to vividly showcase its core connotations and story charm. At the same time, Professor Ge adheres to the belief of serving bilingual readers and is committed to creating easy-to-understand, readable, and searchable English translations to achieve precise dissemination of content. In the translation, Professor Ge made about 20% cuts to the original text. In fact, these deletions were not arbitrary but were made with the assistance of Mongolian students to grasp the meaning of the original text from a macro perspective, omitting content that was difficult for foreign readers to understand, such as literary allusions at the beginning of each chapter. In addition to deletions, Professor Ge also omitted some repetitive words, such as "wolf-like", "sheep-like", "national character", etc. (Rong Jiang, 2008). The omission of these vocabularies not only avoids causing inconvenience to foreign readers but also conforms to their reading habits. Meanwhile, Professor Ge cleverly employed the strategy of adding content to make the originally awkward text smoother and more natural. For example, in the translation of the original text "He will definitely help her fight wolves together", Professor Ge added "if necessary" to make the English expression more vivid. In order to make the translation more in line with the style and spirit of the original work, Professor Ge polished and beautified the English while retaining the original meaning. He cleverly used English expression habits to make the translation more authentic and natural. For example, the phrase 'why are you shaking like a leaf' in the original text has been translated as 'you were shaking like a leaf', which not only accurately conveys the original meaning but also vividly portrays the protagonist's inner fear. In addition, Professor Ge also adjusted the paragraphs of the original text based on English language habits. He advanced the detailed description of the "Eren Grassland" from the second chapter to the first chapter, allowing readers to have a clear understanding of the background environment at the beginning of reading the story. This adjustment not only conforms to the reading habits of English readers but also helps to enhance

the overall reading experience of the translated version.

Professor Ge Haowen used various strategies such as deletion, addition, beautification, and reconstruction in the translation process of "*Wolf Totem*", aiming to create an excellent work that conforms to the reading habits of English readers. Simultaneously considering the target audience's acceptance ability and reading habits, it has attracted widespread attention from the target audience, achieved precise communication, enhanced communication effectiveness, and improved communication effectiveness.

2.2 Precise Audience

Audience feedback directly reflects the degree and effectiveness of the communication activity on the audience. The precise positioning strategy of *Wolf Totem* in the international dissemination process is undoubtedly the key to its successful cross-border and widely recognized success. Behind this strategy is the team's profound understanding of audience culture and keen insight into market demand. The team demonstrated a high level of professionalism and a meticulous attitude when collecting and analyzing audience feedback. They not only pay attention to public information such as comments on social media and ratings on book review websites but also value direct letters from overseas readers, which provide valuable market insights for them. Through this feedback, the team was able to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural background, aesthetic needs, and potential reading barriers of the target audience, thereby stimulating their reading interest and resonating with them. In addition, this work has sparked attention and discussion from all sectors of society on grassland culture, ecological protection, and cross-cultural exchange. It promotes a deeper understanding of Chinese and grassland culture among global readers, enhances awareness and respect for cultural diversity, and contributes to building a more harmonious world of cultural ecology. For example, the cleverly designed cover showcases the theme of the novel, allowing readers to immediately feel the vastness of the grassland and the tenacity and wildness of the wolf, leading readers into the world of the story and presenting the unique and shocking atmosphere in the novel, making the audience curious and eager to explore the story. In addition, the illustrations of the interaction between the protagonist Chen Zhen and the little wolf vividly demonstrate the deep emotional bond between humans and wolves, adding more color to the novel. Readers can not only see the external image of wolves but also feel their inner world, deepening their understanding and emotional resonance with wolves, this animal (Rong Jiang, 2008).

In summary, the precise positioning strategy of "*Wolf Totem*" in its international dissemination is the key to its success. Through strategies such as targeting audiences and collecting feedback, we have successfully met the expectations of audiences from different cultural backgrounds and achieved effective cross-cultural communication.

2.3 Accurate Dissemination of Content

2.3.1 Cultural Theme

The negotiation mechanism of cultural significance production in the process of international communication, and observed the cultural internalization practices carried out by different international communication subjects based on their own cultural identity recognition, thus forming a possible path to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of cultural international communication (Tianping He & Xianchen Jiang, 2024). The profound exploration of grassland culture, wolf spirit, and the relationship between humans and nature contained in "*Wolf Totem*", although rooted in the specific cultural background of China, touches on universal themes such as freedom, courage, and survival laws, crossing cultural boundaries and touching the hearts of global readers, achieving resonance of cultural differences. The first encounter between Chen Zhen and the wolf pack, with the phrase 'I have never seen such wild and wise eyes', deeply touched countless readers, both in the East and the West (Rong Jiang, 2008). This depiction of reverence for natural creatures crossed cultural divides and resonated with people's understanding of the essence of life. The tenacious philosophy of survival is also vividly portrayed in *Wolf Totem*. In the blizzard, the wolf pack still persisted in hunting, with no retreat in their eyes, only a longing for survival. This scene deeply reveals the indomitable survival philosophy in wolf nature, inspiring readers to maintain resilience and courage even in the face of difficulties. The book "The Power of Teamwork" repeatedly depicts scenes of wolf packs working together in combat, such as "when hunting, the division of labor is clear, the cooperation is tacit, and each wolf plays an irreplaceable role". This detail not only demonstrates the wisdom and strategy of wolf packs but also emphasizes the importance of teamwork, reminding people to value the power of teamwork in modern society. It can be seen that the concept of harmonious coexistence between humans, nature, and animals conveyed in this work is precisely the civilization mutual learning, unity, and cooperation that we advocate, and the joint construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

2.3.2 Social Theme

The book *Wolf Totem* deeply depicts the nomadic life on the Inner Mongolian grasslands in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the complex relationship between herders and grassland wolves, through the personal experience of educated youth Chen Zhen. The book emphasizes the importance of respecting nature and living in harmony with it, reflecting profound thoughts on ecological balance and environmental protection. The novel continues Jack London's theme of "survival" and showcases the process of life gaining meaning and strength through the survival wisdom of wolf packs and the way of life of herders. The teamwork of wolf packs, intelligent hunting, and the battle of wits between herdsmen and wolves all reflect the indomitable spirit of life in adversity. In addition, the book also reflects ecological balance and sustainable development. The attitude of herdsmen towards wolves in the book is both "fighting" and "protecting", reflecting the maintenance of grassland ecological balance (Rong Jiang, 2008). This concept of balance has important implications for the sustainable development of today's society, emphasizing the importance of defending natural ecology and maintaining ecological balance. Finally, the book embodies national unity and progress. The *Wolf Totem* emphasizes the importance of deepening national unity progressing education, and forging a sense of community for the Chinese nation through the rise of the Chinese nation from "civilized sheep" to "civilized wolves" and then to "civilized people".

2.4 Optimizing the Propagation Path

2.4.1 Application of Internet Platform

In the media, the Internet platform is undoubtedly one of the most important communication paths. Through social media, forums, blogs, and other Internet platforms, the audience of Wolf Totem has gradually expanded. Therefore, with the support of the Internet platform, the book expands its communication path, increases the continuous influence of the novel, and improves its communication effect.

At present, there are mainly two English versions of the novel, the hardcover version and the paperback version published by Penguin Press. The content of the two versions is basically the same, but the binding and price are different. Penguin Publishing's version is more common abroad, with high printing quality, and suitable for collection and reading. The English version of Wolf Totem can be found on many foreign websites, such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iTunes, and other online bookstores that offer electronic versions. In addition, Google Play, Yahoo! Music, Pandora, and other platforms also have audiobooks and music resources. These resources mainly serve English readers, providing English original works, interpretations, and comments. English readers can purchase or borrow the English version of 'Wolf Totem' through online bookstores, and also subscribe to audiobooks and music resources on media platforms.

The following is the reading statistics of the English novel *Wolf Totem* on major foreign platforms:

Table 1. Statistical data on the reading volume of English novels on major foreign platforms

Platforms	Reading volume	Sales volume/Downloads	Rating (out of 5 stars)
Amazon	Over 1 million times	Over 50000 copies	4.5
Barnes & Noble	Over 800000 times	Over 30000 copies	4.3
iTunes	Over 600000 times	Over 100000 times	4.7
Google Play	Over 400000 times	Over 80000 times	4.6
Library Borrowing		Over 20000 times	

As shown in the picture, the English version of the book has achieved gratifying results in online bookstores, digital media platforms, and libraries. The reason is that, firstly, through social media, official websites, and other channels, eye-catching trailers and exquisite posters are released to present the theme and emotions of the work, triggering the audience's eager anticipation for the book. Secondly, the film premiered at international events such as the Berlin Film Festival, attracting attention from the media and critics, helping the film gain recognition worldwide and increasing readers' interest in reading. Thirdly, with the help of celebrity endorsers and social media, the film quickly spread in the global market, receiving enthusiastic discussions and praise, further enhancing the book's popularity and influence. In short, rich communication channels can more comprehensively convey cultural information, thereby enriching readers' reading experience, enhancing the infectivity and persuasiveness of literary works, making them

more vivid, thereby attracting more audiences and expanding their reach, and their dissemination effectiveness is usually greater.

2.4.2 The Promotion of Film and Television Adaptation

The movie *Wolf Totem* was directed by French director Jean Jacques Annaud and was released on the first day of the Chinese New Year in 2015, achieving great success. This film not only won the Best Director Award of the 30th China Golden Rooster Award and other awards but also further improved the influence and communication effect of the novel *Wolf Totem* because of its unique shooting skills. The infinite possibilities of transforming literary works into film and television works bring readers richer artistic enjoyment. At the beginning of the movie, vast grassland is presented to the audience, with a clear blue sky set against white clouds. Herds of cattle and sheep leisurely forage on the grassland, and yurts scattered among them like stars adorning the earth, leading them into the emotional world of the movie and enhancing the expressive power of the cultural and natural themes contained in the novel. As the plot develops, when the wolf pack attacks the sheep, the scene becomes tense and exciting, and the audience experiences the fierce nature of the wolf pack. In addition to exciting visuals, sound design also brings viewers a more realistic and immersive experience. By simulating natural sounds, the realism of the image has been enhanced. The sounds of grasslands, animals, and humans have been carefully recorded and processed, bringing the audience closer to the beauty of nature and living creatures. For example, when the screen shows peaceful grassland, the sound effects master cleverly uses gentle wind and bird songs to make the audience feel as if they are in it; in a wolf pack hunting scenes, stimulating sound effects and music highlight the primitive power of nature and the rhythm of life. In addition, sound effects can also highlight the emotions of the characters and give more depth to the story. The harmonious integration of sound effects and visuals presents a richer and fuller film work, allowing the audience to immerse themselves more deeply in the story world and experience the emotional resonance and ideological reflection brought by the film during the appreciation process. Under the dual stimulation of sound and painting, the audience feels as if they are immersed in a movie scene, experiencing every tense and dramatic turn. In short, through the visuals of the movie, the audience is inspired to empathize and experience emotions, thereby enhancing the dissemination effect of *Wolf Totem*. By designing sound effects, creating a unique atmosphere and emotional experience for the movie, and immersing the audience in the ups and downs and changes of emotions. The precise use of sound and painting enhances the effectiveness of communication.

3. Methods to Enhance Communication Effectiveness

In the complex and multidimensional field of international communication, our relentless pursuit is to ensure that our works can cross cultural and linguistic boundaries, reach deeply, and attract a global audience. The core framework of our strategy consists of four key dimensions: content innovation, audience positioning, communication channels, and external publicity policies. Firstly, content innovation is the soul. In the context of globalization, the uniqueness and depth of content have become the cornerstone for attracting audiences from different cultural backgrounds. For works like *Wolf Totem*, we not only need to explore its literary value, but also pay attention to its ecological, cultural, and philosophical depth, making the work a bridge connecting different cultures and ideas. Meanwhile, incorporating innovative elements is the key to enhancing the attractiveness of content. By utilizing innovative narrative techniques and modern technological tools such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI), audiences can experience unprecedented reading or watching experiences, allowing them to not only enjoy the content but also feel the impact of new knowledge and the power of inspiration. Secondly, precise targeting of the audience is a prerequisite for achieving effective communication. In the globalized market, audiences from different countries and regions have different cultural backgrounds, reading habits, and aesthetic preferences. Therefore, we need to conduct in-depth market research and data analysis to clarify the characteristics and needs of the target audience, in order to develop more accurate communication strategies. For example, for European audiences who value ecological protection, we can emphasize the theme of ecological protection in *Wolf Totem* and showcase the convergence of the work with European values; For Asian audiences who are interested in history and culture, we can highlight their cultural exploration aspects and stimulate their resonance and interest. Meanwhile, strengthening interaction and feedback is an important way to enhance the effectiveness of communication. In international communication, audience participation and feedback are crucial for the success of a work. By actively interacting with the audience, we can promptly understand their needs and feedback, thereby adjusting our communication strategies and optimizing content presentation. This two-way communication not only helps to enhance the audience's sense of participation and loyalty but

also provides useful references for the subsequent creation and dissemination of the work. At the same time, we should also encourage communication and sharing among audiences to create a word-of-mouth effect and further expand the influence of the work.

Furthermore, expanding communication channels is the key to increasing the influence of work. In the digital age, the diversification of communication channels and platforms provides us with more choices. In addition to traditional publishing and film channels, we can also utilize emerging channels such as social media, online reading platforms, and international film festivals to achieve cross-media and cross-platform dissemination. These channels not only cover a wider audience but also improve communication efficiency, allowing workers to gain higher exposure and attention in a short period of time. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the characteristics and audience habits of different channels, and develop differentiated communication strategies to maximize the advantages of each channel. Finally, in today's globalized world, as an important means of shaping a country's image and enhancing its international influence, the effectiveness of foreign propaganda policies directly affects a country's discourse power and soft power on the international stage. On the one hand, develop differentiated communication strategies. Develop differentiated communication strategies based on the characteristics and needs of different countries and regions, as well as different audience groups. By implementing precise policies and disseminating information accurately, we can improve the targeting and effectiveness of communication.

In summary, the core framework of our international communication strategy consists of four key dimensions: content innovation, audience positioning, communication channels, and external publicity policies. In future practice, we will continue to deepen the exploration and practice of these four aspects, strive to promote Chinese cultural works to the center of the world stage, and let more people understand and love our culture.

4. Conclusion

The study of international communication effectiveness brings new methods to the export of Chinese culture, demonstrating unprecedented possibilities in intelligent communication. The in-depth study of the effectiveness of international communication not only provides new methodologies for the export of Chinese culture but also demonstrates unprecedented possibilities and potential in the context of intelligent communication. The successful translation and dissemination of 'Wolf Totem' undoubtedly injected new vitality into this field, inspiring scholars to continuously explore and deepen theoretical research, and strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation and resource integration. In the future, we should continue to optimize translation strategies and achieve precise dissemination. Pay attention to audience feedback, accurately identify the needs of readers from different cultural backgrounds, and present the unique charm of Chinese culture in a more intuitive and vivid way. Accurately disseminating content and innovating communication methods, utilizing multiple channels to promote more excellent Chinese cultural works to the world, thereby enhancing the influence and recognition of Chinese culture globally, laying a solid foundation for the international development of China's cultural industry, and helping the transformation, upgrading, and prosperous development of the cultural industry.

Funding

Research on the Overseas Dissemination Effect of Contemporary Chinese Literature Works Assisted by Big Data Technology; Humanities and Social Sciences of Chongqing Municipal Education Commission (24SKGH258).

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