Technology Empowerment and Narrative Reconstruction: International Brand Communication Strategies of Chinese Enterprises in Africa from the Perspective of AIGC Large Models

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Abstract: This paper explores how AIGC large models empower the international brand communication of Chinese enterprises in Africa. Addressing current public opinion challenges and cultural barriers, the study proposes leveraging AIGC to drive a fundamental shift in narrative logic: transitioning from "official monologues" to "polyphonic empathy" and from "grand narratives" to "localized micro-narratives." By establishing "human-machine collaboration" workflows and virtual IP matrices, this paper aims to provide strategic pathways for Chinese enterprises to break the Western discursive monopoly and achieve precise, efficient localized communication in Africa.

Keywords: AIGC Large Models; Chinese Enterprises in Africa; Narrative Reconstruction; Technology Empowerment; Cross-cultural Communication

I. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Currently, the global geopolitical landscape is undergoing profound adjustments, and Sino-African cooperation has entered a new stage of quality improvement and upgrading. However, in the international public opinion arena, narratives regarding Sino-African cooperation have long been dominated by mainstream Western media. Chinese enterprises in Africa often face the dilemma of "doing well" but being unable to "articulate well" or "articulate effectively." Due to cultural differences, language barriers, and singular communication channels, corporate images are frequently labeled with stereotypes such as "closed-off" or "mere infrastructure builders," resulting in a significant "reputation deficit."

Simultaneously, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AIGC) large models, represented by ChatGPT and Sora, have experienced explosive growth, reshaping the ecology of global information production and dissemination. AIGC large models possess powerful cross-modal generation capabilities, multilingual processing abilities, and deep data insights, offering new technological pathways to break through cross-cultural communication barriers. Against this backdrop, exploring how to utilize AIGC technology to empower the brand communication of Chinese enterprises in Africa and reconstruct narrative logic, thereby enhancing international communication effectiveness, has become a pressing practical issue to be addressed.

1.2 Research Significance

The **theoretical significance** of this study lies in expanding the interdisciplinary research field of Intelligent Communication and international public relations. Previous studies have mostly focused on the technical ethics of AIGC or its domestic applications, with less examination within the specific context of the "Global South" and Sino-African cross-cultural communication. This study attempts to construct a brand narrative reconstruction model under the perspective of AIGC, enriching the theoretical toolbox of international communication.

The **practical significance** lies in providing actionable strategic guidance for Chinese enterprises in Africa. Facing Africa's complex linguistic environment (such as minor languages like Swahili and Hausa) and diverse cultural customs, Chinese enterprises urgently need communication means that are low-cost, highly efficient, and locally adaptable. By analyzing the pathways of technology empowerment, this study aims to help enterprises reduce cross-cultural communication costs, avoid communication risks, and truly achieve the enhancement of soft power from "going global" to "integrating locally."

1.3 Definition of Core Concepts

1.3.1 Definition of AIGC Large Models in the Communication Perspective In this study, AIGC (Artificial Intelligence Generated Content) large models specifically refer to intelligent systems based on deep learning algorithms that can utilize massive amounts of data for pre-training and automatically generate high-quality multi-modal content such as text, images, audio, and video based on specific instructions. In brand communication, it is not merely a content production tool but an intelligent hub for connecting user emotions and analyzing the public opinion ecology.

1.3.2 Narrative Reconstruction Narrative reconstruction refers to the systematic innovation of the subject, content, logic, and method of storytelling by communication subjects when facing new media environments and audience demands. In the context of this paper, it specifically refers to Chinese enterprises in Africa utilizing new technologies to shift from the past "self-centered" grand narratives (e.g., emphasizing project scale and investment amounts) to "audience-centered" localized, interactive, and empathetic narratives. The aim is to break the discursive monopoly of Western-centrism and establish a new brand image with African local affinity.

II. Theoretical Framework and Status Quo

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1 Technology Empowerment Theory Technology Empowerment Theory posits that the introduction of emerging media technologies can redistribute communication power and endow communication subjects with new capabilities. In the era of traditional media, international communication heavily relied on expensive satellite television and news agency channels. In the perspective of AIGC, technology empowerment manifests as the "democratization of productivity" and "enhancement of creativity." For Chinese enterprises in Africa, AIGC breaks the high barrier of Professional Generated Content (PGC), enabling enterprises to acquire multilingual and multi-modal communication capabilities at extremely low costs, thereby transforming from passive "the narrated" to active "narrators."

2.1.2 Glocalization Theory Roland Robertson's concept of "Glocalization" emphasizes the dialectical unity of global universality and local particularity. In international brand communication, this means enterprises must maintain globally unified brand core values (Global) while deeply adapting to the cultural context of the target market (Local). In Africa, this requires Chinese enterprises not to simply transplant domestic promotion models but to respect the distinct religious, tribal cultures, and aesthetic habits of the 54 African countries. The massive data training mechanism of AIGC large models provides theoretical feasibility for rapidly capturing and adapting to these complex local characteristics.

2.1.3 Narrative Transportation Theory Narrative Transportation Theory, proposed by Green and Brock, suggests that when audiences are immersed in a story, their critical mechanisms regarding reality weaken, making them more likely to accept the attitudes and beliefs conveyed by the story. This theory reveals the psychological mechanism where "storytelling" is superior to "reasoning." For Chinese enterprises, how to use technology to generate stories with high immersion, rather than dry listings of data, is the key to enhancing communication persuasiveness.

2.2 Status Quo of Brand Communication of Chinese Enterprises in Africa

2.2.1 Communication Subjects: Dominated by SOEs, Rising Voice of Private Enterprises Currently, brand communication subjects in Africa are still dominated by large State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in infrastructure, energy, and telecommunications (e.g., CRBC, Huawei, ZTE). Although these enterprises enjoy high recognition locally, their brand images are often tightly bound to the national image, characterized by "strong politics, weak commerce." Meanwhile, private enterprises represented by Transsion have begun to establish unique brand influence in the consumer electronics sector through deep localization strategies. However, overall, the brand communication of Chinese SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) remains atomized and fragmented.

2.2.2 Communication Content: Emphasis on "Hard Power," Lacking "Soft Emotional" Resonance A review of existing cases reveals that the narrative texts of Chinese enterprises mostly focus on "Hard Facts" such as project progress, technical parameters, and investment scale—for instance, emphasizing kilometers of roads built or base stations erected. This "engineering mindset" dominated communication model, while demonstrating material contributions, neglects African audiences' concerns regarding environmental protection, labor rights, and community integration. It is difficult to trigger resonance on an emotional level and is even prone to being misinterpreted by Western media as "resource plunder" or "neocolonialism."

2.2.3 Communication Channels: Reliance on Official and Traditional Media, Insufficient Social Media Penetration Despite the extremely high penetration of social platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp among African youth, the communication of most Chinese enterprises still relies heavily on the overseas editions of official media like Xinhua and CCTV, or local traditional newspapers. Enterprises' own social media accounts (Owned Media) often suffer from low update frequency and poor interactivity, lacking short video and live streaming content tailored to the preferences of Africa's "Gen Z," resulting in an inability to reach the most dynamic young audience segments.

2.3 Major Problems and Challenges

2.3.1 "Cultural Discount" and Language Barriers The linguistic environment in Africa is extremely complex. Besides English, French, and Portuguese, indigenous languages like Swahili, Hausa, and Amharic are widely used. Traditional human translation is costly and difficult to make authentic, leading to severe "Cultural Discount" during cross-lingual information conversion. Many promotional copies suffer from "Chinglish" or rigid translation, which not only fails to convey brand concepts but also causes misunderstandings.[1]

2.3.2 Passive Defensive Posture in Public Opinion In the African public opinion arena, Western media such as BBC, CNN, and France 24 have long held discursive dominance and constructed relatively solidified negative narrative frameworks (e.g., the "Debt Trap" theory). Facing sudden public opinion crises or smear campaigns, Chinese enterprises often react sluggishly, lacking the ability to use data tools for real-time sentiment monitoring and precise rebuttal, often finding themselves in a passive defensive position where they "have the truth but cannot speak it out, or speak it but cannot spread it."

2.3.3 Homogeneity of Communication and Blurred Audience Portraits The communication content of many Chinese enterprises is monotonous, lacking differentiated strategies for different African countries (e.g., the vast differences between South Africa and Ethiopia). Due to the lack of precise user portraits based on big data,

communication is often a "flood irrigation" approach, unable to precisely reach target customer groups, leading to wasted communication resources and low efficiency.

III. Technology Empowerment: How AIGC Reshapes Communication Productivity

3.1 Cost Reduction and Efficiency Enhancement in Content Production: The Paradigm Shift from PGC to AIGC

3.1.1 Automated Generation and Adaptation of Multilingual Content Facing the complex environment of over 2,000 languages on the African continent, the traditional human translation model is not only expensive but also inefficient.[2] AIGC large models (such as GPT-4, Claude 3, etc.) have demonstrated excellent "Zero-shot Learning" capabilities, enabling high-quality conversion from Chinese or English directly into indigenous African languages like Hausa and Yoruba. This is not merely language translation but the transfer of pragmatic habits. Technology empowerment allows Chinese enterprises in Africa to mass-produce press releases, social media copies, and product descriptions that conform to local linguistic habits at an extremely low marginal cost, greatly alleviating the "language barrier."

3.1.2 Intelligent Creation of Multi-modal Materials The production cycle for traditional brand visual materials (posters, videos) is long and often lacks African elements. With text-to-image and text-to-video technologies like Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and Sora, enterprises can rapidly generate high-definition visual content containing local elements such as African landscapes, skin tones, and clothing based on specific prompts. For example, when promoting photovoltaic products, AIGC can automatically generate realistic renderings of products applied in Kenyan savannas or Nigerian urban villages, significantly reducing the cost and risk of on-site shooting and achieving the "decentralization" and "high frequency" of content production.

3.2 User Insight and Precision Profiling: Data Mining Based on Large Models

3.2.1 Affective Computing in Cross-Cultural Public Opinion Public opinion on African social media (e.g., Twitter/X, Facebook) is often a mix of English, French, and local slang (Pidgin), which traditional keyword scraping tools find difficult to identify accurately. AIGC large models possess powerful Natural Language Processing (NLP) capabilities, enabling them to understand complex contextual irony and metaphors. By deep learning from massive social data, enterprises can monitor public sentiment tendencies towards Chinese companies in real-time, precisely identifying variants of negative narratives like "neocolonialism" or "debt traps," thereby shifting from "post-event remediation" to "pre-event warning."

3.2.2 Construction of Fine-Grained Audience Portraits AIGC technology can integrate scattered user behavior data to build high-precision profiles of African audiences. Unlike the generalized "African user" of the past, technology empowerment allows enterprises to segment audiences into granular groups such as "environmentally conscious South African middle class," "tech-savvy Kenyan Gen Z," or "value-oriented West African small traders." This refinement enables brand communication to move away from "flood irrigation" and achieve precise, personalized delivery.

3.3 Upgrade of Interaction Experience: All-Weather Intelligent Connection

3.3.1 Localized Intelligent Customer Service and Instant Response Addressing the issues of significant time differences between China and Africa and limited online hours for human customer service, large model-based AI Chatbots can provide 24/7 online service. Unlike traditional Rule-based rigid responses, generative AI can conduct fluent multi-turn conversations and even simulate local interjections (such as "Is it?" in South African English or "No wahala" in West African English), providing warmer emotional companionship while solving user after-sales problems.

3.3.2 Application of Virtual Humans AIGC technology makes it possible to create low-cost virtual brand ambassadors. Enterprises can customize "African-faced" digital avatars with affinity to conduct uninterrupted

product demonstrations and interactions on TikTok or livestreaming platforms. These virtual figures not only avoid the potential moral risks associated with real influencers but can also continuously optimize their expressions, movements, and interaction strategies through deep learning, becoming new media nodes connecting enterprises with young African audiences.

IV. Narrative Reconstruction: The Logical Shift from "Other-Shaped" to "Self-Shaped"

4.1 Reconstruction of Narrative Subjects: From "Official Monologue" to "Pluralistic Polyphony"

4.1.1 Breaking the Limitations of a Singular Perspective For a long time, the brand narrative of Chinese enterprises in Africa has shown distinct characteristics of an "Official Monologue," relying primarily on corporate executives or official spokespersons to disseminate information top-down. This singular perspective easily creates a sense of distance or even distrust among African audiences. The introduction of AIGC technology makes decentralized content production possible. Enterprises can use AI-assisted tools to empower local employees, community residents, and even beneficiaries to become narrative subjects, forming a "Polyphony" communication structure as described by Bakhtin.

4.1.2 "Third-Party" Testimonials under Human-Machine Collaboration Through the big data mining capabilities of AIGC, enterprises can identify influential local KOCs (Key Opinion Consumers) on social networks. Using AI-generated auxiliary scripts, these "third parties" are encouraged to tell stories of their interactions with Chinese enterprises in their own language. For example, letting a Kenyan train driver recount how he mastered technology under the guidance of a Chinese mentor. This "Self-shaping" from the perspective of the "Other" is more convincing than corporate self-promotion and can effectively counteract the negative labels "Other-shaped" by Western media.

4.2 Reconstruction of Narrative Texts: From "Generic Translation" to "Cultural Translation"

4.2.1 Deep Desensitization and Adaptation of Language Traditional cross-cultural communication often stops at the level of "linguistic translation," frequently leading to awkward expressions that fail to convey the intended meaning. Narrative reconstruction in the perspective of AIGC large models requires achieving "Cultural Translation." This means text generation must not only be grammatically correct but also conform to local pragmatic logic and cultural psychology. For instance, when targeting the South African market, AI can assist in integrating brand concepts with the spirit of "Ubuntu" (meaning "I am because we are"); in the West African market, it can incorporate the narrative style of "Griots" (traditional African storytellers).

4.2.2 Localized Reorganization of Symbol Systems Narrative is not just text; it is also symbols. Chinese symbols habitually used by Chinese enterprises, such as "Dragons" or "Red Lanterns," may face interpretation barriers in the African context. AIGC image generation technology can help enterprises reorganize visual symbol systems, organically fusing brand elements with indigenous African colors (such as Pan-African colors), totems, and natural landscapes (such as Baobab trees). This visual "localization" can subtly eliminate the brand's identity as an "outsider" and establish psychological identification at the visual level.

4.3 Reconstruction of Narrative Logic: From "Grand Narrative" to "Micro-Empathy"

4.3.1 Discarding Hard Narratives Piled with Data Addressing the "engineering mindset" pain point mentioned earlier, narrative reconstruction requires a shift from "Grand Narrative" to "Micro-Narrative." AIGC can handle not only big data but also generate "small stories." Using AI emotion analysis models, enterprises can unearth individual stories submerged in massive data—not "investing 1 billion dollars," but "how this investment allowed Mary in the village to use an electric light for the first time."[3]

4.3.2 Building Emotional Connections Based on Common Human Values With the assistance of AIGC, narrative logic should transcend mere commercial exchange and rise to the level of Common Human Values. By analyzing issues universally concerning African audiences, such as poverty alleviation, women's empowerment,

and climate change, AI can assist in generating narrative scripts that emphasize "companionship," "growth," and "shared destiny." [4]This logical shift aims to break through cognitive barriers through Emotional Resonance, reconstructing "Chinese Technology" into an "Enabler of a Better Life."

V. Strategic Pathways: Communication Optimization Strategies under the Perspective of AIGC

5.1 Establishing a "Human-Machine Collaboration" Cross-Cultural Content Factory

5.1.1 Constructing Vertical Large Models for Specific Domains While general large models (like GPT-4) are knowledgeable, they often lack a deep understanding of the specific context of Sino-African cooperation. Chinese enterprises in Africa should establish internal knowledge bases and utilize RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) technology or LoRA (Low-Rank Adaptation) fine-tuning technology. By feeding the model with the enterprise's past successful communication cases, laws and regulations of African countries, and data on religious taboos, they can build a vertical model that understands both "Chinese stories" and "African rules," ensuring the political correctness and cultural safety of the output content.

5.1.2 Establishing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of "AI Generation + Human Review"To effectively balance production efficiency and potential public opinion risks, Chinese enterprises in Africa should reshape their existing communication workflows and establish a rigorous "Human-In-The-Loop" (HITL) standard operating procedure. This process is not a simple addition of humans and machines but the construction of an organic, collaborative closed-loop system. Specifically, enterprises should first utilize the high-efficiency generation capabilities of AIGC large models to mass-produce initial drafts of multilingual copy and scripts, rapidly addressing the issue of "quantity" in content shortages. Subsequently, "Cultural Gatekeepers" familiar with local social customs and religious taboos must be introduced into the review loop to strictly proofread the metaphors, humor, or specific visual symbols generated by AI for cultural desensitization and compliance, ensuring the safety and appropriateness of the "quality." [5]Finally, these human-corrected high-quality data points are fed back into the model training end as negative or positive feedback signals. By continuously fine-tuning model parameters through Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF) mechanisms, a virtuous iterative cycle of "generation-review-optimization" is formed, constantly enhancing the model's adaptability and generation precision regarding the diverse African local contexts.

5.2 Creating a Matrix of Brand IP Images Integrating the Virtual and Real

5.2.1 Developing Localized Digital Humans Given the high cost and potential reputational risks of hiring local celebrities as spokespersons, enterprises can use AIGC technology to create their own virtual IPs. For example, designing a virtual employee named "Amara" with Pan-African facial features and proficiency in multiple languages. "She" can serve as the enterprise's 24/7 spokesperson, live-streaming sales anchor, or online customer service representative. The virtual IP image is stable, controllable, and can quickly adapt to the aesthetic preferences of different countries through technical means, becoming a carrier of brand personification.

5.2.2 Exploring "Afrofuturism" Visual Styles Combining African youth's aspiration for technology and the future, enterprises can use AI painting tools to explore the visual narrative of "Afrofuturism." This involves artistically fusing Chinese high-speed rail, 5G base stations, and photovoltaic panels with traditional African totems and natural landscapes in a cyberpunk style. This novel visual impact can effectively capture the attention of "Gen Z" audiences, conveying a subconscious signal of "technology empowering African modernization."

5.3 Building an Omni-Media Intelligent Distribution and Private Domain Operation System

5.3.1 Intelligent Content Distribution Based on Algorithmic Mechanisms Utilizing AI to analyze the recommendation logic of different platforms (TikTok, Facebook, YouTube). For TikTok, AI generates

fast-paced short videos with strong plot twists; for Facebook, it generates long narratives with rich images and text; for LinkedIn, it generates professional and rigorous industry reports. Through intelligent distribution strategies, the exposure rate and long-tail effect of content are maximized.

5.3.2 Activation of Private Domain Traffic within the WhatsApp Ecosystem WhatsApp is the social tool with the highest penetration rate in Africa. Enterprises can use AI Chatbots to access the WhatsApp Business API and establish an automated private domain community operation system. AI can push customized festival greetings, product information, or educational content to specific user groups (such as "Nigerian Distributor Group," "Kenyan Tech Enthusiast Group") based on users' historical interaction data, building deep brand trust through high-frequency interaction within a relatively closed private space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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