| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Literature Review on the Construction of China's Arctic Image

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| ABSTRACT

Present studies on construction of China's Arctic image are mainly analyzed from non-linguistics perspective and linguistics perspective. From a non-linguistics standpoint, studies mainly draw on international relations, communication, law, and cartography, examining how China shapes its Arctic image through identity positioning, international engagement, public diplomacy, legal argumentation, and map discourse. The linguistics perspective, by contrast, focuses on discourse analysis and narrative analysis, exploring the vocabulary, rhetoric, and narrative logic embedded in official documents, academic discourse, and media coverage, to reveal how language functions as a strategic tool to convey positions, reflect state strategies, and shape external perceptions. However, previous studies has some limitations, primarily including insufficient analysis and contextual interpretation from the linguistics perspective, inadequate examination of the diversity of actors and interactive mechanisms, and limited depth and breadth in quantitative and empirical analysis. Looking ahead, future research should seek to deepen the scope of linguistic discourse analysis, broaden actors, and make fuller use of quantitative approaches.

| KEYWORDS

China's Arctic image; image construction; national image; non-linguistics perspective; linguistics perspective

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

1. Introduction

As a carrier of a nation's economic, political, and cultural soft power, national image has attracted unprecedented attention amid the growing competition among major powers in today's world. A positive national image helps advance national interests and promotes foreign strategies in international politics (Zhang, 2017). However, the spillover effects of the Russia–Ukraine conflict have led to the increasing geopoliticization of the Arctic, creating an unprecedented crisis for traditional frameworks of international cooperation. As a result, China's Arctic policy and its role in Arctic cooperation have been affected, and the country's image in Arctic affairs is now under close scrutiny by the international community (Hong, 2023). To effectively safeguard China's national interests in the Arctic, it is essential to construct an image of China as a responsible and trustworthy Arctic participant. Scholars have conducted extensive research on the construction of this image, producing a rich body of literature. This paper systematically reviews and evaluates existing studies on the construction of China's Arctic image, aiming to outline the development of this research and, on this basis, propose future direction for further exploration.

2. Research on the Construction of China's Arctic Image from Non-Linguistics Perspectives

Studies on the construction of China's Arctic image from non-linguistics perspectives mainly draw on disciplines such as international relations, communication, law, and cartography. These studies focus on how China constructs its Arctic image through non-verbal means, including identity positioning, practical actions, legal arguments, and visual representation in maps.

2.1 The International Relations Perspective

From the perspective of international relations, scholars focus primarily on two aspects : first, the definition and logic of China's identity construction in Arctic affairs ; and second, how the state shapes its Arctic image through actions and discourse in interactions and practices. This line of research often applies frameworks such as constructivism, resource-environment

governance theory, neo-functionalism, trust theory, signaling theory, post-structuralism, and international practice theory. The research materials mainly include China's official policy documents, leaders' speeches, and diplomatic practices.

The concept of identity originates from sociology. Social psychologist Henri Tajfel (1974, p.69) defines identity as "the individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to a certain social group together with the emotional and value significance attached to that membership." Since the 1990s, identity theory has been introduced into international relations and has become an important part of constructivism. Constructivists argue that an actor's identity influences its preferences, which define its interests, and those interests in turn determine its behavior. Therefore, China's identity in Arctic affairs not only affects how it expresses its interests and makes policy choices but also shapes how the international community interprets its intentions and actions.

Academic discussions have produced multiple views on China's proper identity in Arctic affairs. The most common narratives are that of a "Near-Arctic State" and an "Arctic Stakeholder." The former emphasizes China's geographical proximity and natural links to the Arctic, arguing that this identity enhances the legitimacy of its participation in Arctic governance (Liu, 2012; Li & Han, 2022). The latter, grounded in national interests, defines China as a "stakeholder" to highlight its legitimate concerns and cooperative intentions, thereby overcoming the binary opposition between "Arctic" and "non-Arctic" states (Wang, 2013; Ruan, 2016; Dong, 2017). Some scholars propose hybrid or composite identities (Chen, 2023), or extend the concept further to a "Pan-Arctic Community" (Ding & Zhang, 2016) or "Greater Arctic" (Li, 2015) to expand China's legitimacy in Arctic governance. Based on resource—environment governance theory, Qu and Yang (2023) suggest that China should engage in Arctic affairs with multiple roles—as a stakeholder, a resource developer, and a contributor to environmental protection—and on this basis promote the construction of a "Community of Shared Future for the Arctic."

"National image exists in a process of constant construction through international interaction; it is neither fixed nor immutable. As the modes of inter-state interaction evolve, the shared perceptions formed through social learning will also change in nature. Accordingly, the mutual recognition between states is redefined, leading to adjustments in how they identify and define each other's national identities, which in turn reshapes their respective national images" (Li & Zhao, 2023, p.31).

Building on identity research, scholars have further explored how China constructs its Arctic image through international engagement. Lanteigne (2017), using a neo-functionalist framework, argues that China and other "sub-Arctic" states have gradually established legitimate Arctic identities by prioritizing scientific research followed by economic participation. Su and Mayer (2018), drawing on trust theory, show that scientific cooperation helps transform procedural trust into generalized trust, reducing external suspicion toward China. Similarly, research based on signaling theory suggests that China sends "high-cost signals," such as adopting proactive environmental policies, to demonstrate its willingness to comply with international norms (Wang, 2023). By reducing sensitive investments, increasing cooperation in environmental fields, and integrating into regional organizations, China further mitigates the impact of the "China threat" narrative (Wang & Ma, 2024). Together, these studies depict China's efforts to project the image of a responsible major power in Arctic affairs. However, geopolitical complexities add uncertainty to this image-building process. Zhao and Zhang (2024) note that the spillover effects of the Russia–Ukraine conflict have reshaped the Arctic's security and cooperation frameworks, negatively affecting China's strategic security and international image.

With the "discursive turn" in international relations, some scholars have shifted their focus to the interaction between discourse and practice. Kiziukiewicz (2017), adopting a post-structuralist approach, argues that China shapes a multifaceted national image not only through official documents and leaders' speeches but also through "body language" and "the language of silence." Su and Huntington (2021), combining discourse and international practice theories, analyze how language and practice jointly constitute a nation's external posture and geopolitical role. They find that China has yet to develop a consistent habitus in Arctic affairs and lacks a shared field of interaction with Arctic states, which makes its Arctic image appear ambiguous to the outside world.

2.2 The Communication Perspective

Xue and Yu (2016) first introduced the concept of polar communication, marking the beginning of research on China's Arctic image from a communication perspective. Within this framework, scholars have explored the construction and perception of China's Arctic image from two main dimensions: the communicator and the audience. Studies on communicators often draw on public diplomacy theory, focusing on China's overall strategic communication layout and the roles of multiple actors in external communication. Audience-centered studies, by contrast, mainly use textual analysis to examine how think tanks in different countries interpret and respond to China's Arctic activities and image.

In research on communicators, scholars generally emphasize the central role of public diplomacy in shaping China's Arctic image. Public diplomacy is defined as "a form of diplomacy initiated, endorsed, or supported by the government, in which non-state actors can participate widely under governmental guidance" (Xiao & Yang, 2024, p.201). Through multi-channel and cross-level communication practices, public diplomacy serves national interests and becomes a key instrument for enhancing a country's image. Related studies mainly focus on two aspects: overall strategic planning and the practical actions of diverse communicative actors.

At the strategic level, Jia and Shi (2014) were among the first to argue that under new Arctic circumstances, China urgently needs to formulate a systematic Arctic policy while advancing public diplomacy in parallel. Building on this, Zhao (2019) further outlined the practical pathways for China's Arctic public diplomacy, suggesting that it should focus on discourse construction, actor-network expansion, platform utilization, and audience targeting.

Regarding the practices of diverse communicative actors, scholars have examined the roles of enterprises, think tanks, and media in public diplomacy. Sun and Li (2022), in a comparative study of public diplomacy among China, Japan, and South Korea, argued that China should leverage the influence of academic and corporate groups—such as scholars, universities, and business associations—to strengthen engagement with international and civil organizations involved in Arctic affairs. Sun and Zhang (2017) suggested that Chinese enterprises, while pursuing economic interests, should also take on public diplomacy responsibilities to project a responsible corporate image. Xu (2019) found that China's repeated investment setbacks in the Arctic were not due to "hard" factors like capital or technology, but rather to "soft" factors—namely, the failure to manage external public opinion and mitigate skepticism toward China's national image. Therefore, enterprises must improve communication and build mutual trust with local communities.

Yang (2022) observed that Chinese Arctic-related think tanks still face problems such as limited content appeal and vague audience targeting. She argued that it is crucial to improve communication awareness, diversify channels, and establish effective feedback mechanisms to enhance China's influence in the Arctic discourse system. Ruan and Qu (2020) further noted that the image of China as an "Arctic threat" is not the product of a single media narrative, but rather a co-constructed outcome of multiple national media systems. In this process, U.S. mainstream media act as deliberate constructors, while outlets in Canada, the U.K., and Japan actively reinforce this image; media in Nordic countries and Singapore tend to be passive recipients of such narratives.

To address the spread of negative coverage, several scholars have proposed countermeasures. Xue (2020) argued that Chinese media should enhance originality, resource sharing, and timeliness, while developing an independent Arctic communication model and integrated media platforms. Li et al. (2021) suggested that media strategies for Arctic communication should be guided by the spirit of "Harmony Culture" and take advantage of the development of Arctic shipping routes to showcase China's identity as a responsible major power.

Beyond communicator-focused studies, some scholars have turned to the audience's perception and response to China's Arctic image. Guo and Yang (2023) found that the U.S. perception of China's Arctic role is long affected by misperceptions—American actors tend to filter out China's goodwill signals and exaggerate the strategic implications of its economic or scientific activities, thereby constructing a stigmatized image of China. Similarly, Yang (2019) and Liu and Xiu (2020) revealed that U.S. think tanks reinforce the "China threat" narrative, consolidating unfavorable perceptions of China in international discourse. Zhang and Dong (2023) discovered that Nordic think tanks' attitudes toward China's Arctic involvement follow a trend of "the friendly becoming friendlier and the distant becoming more distant." Despite U.S.-driven narratives of the "China threat," some Nordic states still maintain relatively independent and objective assessments. Liu (2024) showed that Russian think tanks' overall evaluation of China's Arctic participation has gradually shifted from a mixed view of "opportunities and challenges" to one predominantly characterized by opportunities. In this context, scholars suggest that China should continue to proactively shape Arctic narratives, strengthen government and civil-level communication, and build trust mechanisms to enhance the dissemination of its Arctic vision.

2.3 Other Perspectives

Beyond international relations and communication studies, disciplines such as law and cartography have also examined the construction of China's Arctic image, with each field offering a distinct focus.

From a legal standpoint, research has centered on international law as the primary analytical tool. By integrating historical documents, treaty texts, and international legal statutes through historical verification and case study methodologies, this body of work addresses the legal foundation for China's engagement in Arctic affairs and its adherence to established regulations. The principal objective is to cultivate China's Arctic image through the pillars of legal legitimacy and rule-based practices.

In justifying this legal basis, existing scholarship has concentrated on two main arguments: historical involvement and treaty rights. Duan (2019) has provided substantial historical evidence confirming China's accession to the *Spitsbergen Treaty* in 1925. This fact serves as a powerful counter-narrative to the assertion that China is a "newcomer" to Arctic affairs, lending crucial support to its image as a "longstanding and legitimate participant." Lu (2016) further reinforces this by noting that under the *Spitsbergen Treaty* and associated *Economic Zone Acts*, China possesses equal fishing rights within the territorial waters and fishery protection zones of the Svalbard archipelago, thereby strengthening the legal underpinnings of its participation through specific entitlements. Additionally, Tang and Xia (2017) have utilized the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) to argue for the rationality of China's involvement in the governance and development of Arctic oil and gas resources. With this legal foundation established, scholars have proceeded to investigate how China can foster a responsible image by adhering to international legal norms and contributing to governance practices. Bai and Zhu (2023) have explored China's participation in the evolution of international law on relevant issues at global, regional, and bilateral/multilateral levels. Their findings indicate that at the global level, China acts as a participant in global governance under the framework of international

law to uphold the existing international order. At the regional level, China has consistently supported and engaged with the Arctic Council, both before and after its formal establishment. At the bilateral and multilateral levels, as an Arctic stakeholder committed to cooperation, China has achieved numerous collaborative successes. In the realms of shipping and environmental protection, Montazeritabar and Ye (2024) contend that by complying with international legal instruments such as UNCLOS and the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships* (MARPOL), China is actively contributing to the ecological preservation of the Arctic and progressively shaping its image as a "responsible protector of the Arctic environment." Yang (2018), focusing on the legal status of Arctic shipping lanes, has argued that China should proactively defend its navigational rights within the international legal framework to support its maritime power strategy, a view that underscores China's image as a "major maritime nation adept at using law to protect its legitimate interests." In the context of multilateral cooperation and institutional engagement, Bai (2018) has stressed the need for China to cultivate an Arctic community of shared interests through deeper involvement in intergovernmental organizations like the Arctic Council, while also championing the development of dialogue platforms for non-Arctic stakeholders.

From a cartographic perspective, maps function as visual cultural artifacts with a unique capacity to disseminate geographical knowledge, shape spatial awareness, and project national image (Yu, 2023). Current research in this area has primarily focused on the impact of maps on public perception of the Arctic and their discursive power.

Bennett (2014), through a comparative analysis of Arctic map depictions by state actors like China and South Korea and non-state entities such as Greenpeace, revealed the differing ideologies underpinning these representations. Yin (2015) elaborated on this, stating that "maps are one of the most vital carriers for the expression of terrestrial space, characterized by their intuitive, comprehensive, and scientific nature, which aids the public in understanding the oceans and forming correct views on marine territory, resources, rights, and national security." Employing cartographic tools, he examined the limitations of traditional maps in shaping public understanding of the Arctic and the strategic advantages of new cartographic designs. He highlighted the vertical *World Topographic Map* developed by Hao Xiaoguang of the Institute of Geodesy and Geophysics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In contrast to conventional horizontal maps, this vertical projection not only corrects distortions at high latitudes but also visually articulates the spatial relationships between the Arctic Ocean and circumpolar nations. This helps the public develop a more three-dimensional understanding of national territory and heightens their awareness of maritime and polar regions, providing a scientific and geographical foundation for Arctic cognition. Yin advocated for the active promotion of this vertical map by both governmental and non-governmental bodies. Furthermore, scholars like Ye (2016) have suggested that newly designed world maps, with their dual-longitude and dual-latitude frameworks, integrate Arctic shipping routes into the spatial narrative of the "Belt and Road" initiative, thereby supporting the construction of a spatial discourse that positions China as a key stakeholder in these routes. Li (2015), using an Arctic-centric projection, introduced the concept of the "Greater Arctic (State)" to clearly illustrate the network of nations within this expanded region. Finally, He (2017) argued that discursive reconstruction through cartography is a vital avenue for China's engagement in Arctic affairs. The selection and comprehensive application of suitable map projections can effectively articulate the China-Arctic relationship. This "cartographic discourse" can facilitate the reconstruction of bilateral relations and China's Arctic identity, thereby enhancing domestic and international comprehension and acceptance of a favorable "Arctic identity" for China and fostering its creative participation in Arctic matters.

In summary, non-linguistic approaches to the construction of China's Arctic image have been explored through the lenses of international relations, communication studies, law, and cartography. The international relations perspective concentrates on the theoretical definition of China's Arctic identity and its dynamic formation in international interactions. The communication studies perspective examines both the communicator and the audience, emphasizing on one hand the public diplomacy and external communication strategies of diverse actors like corporations, think tanks, and media under governmental guidance, and on the other, the perceptions and responses of international audiences to China's actions in the Arctic, which reveals the genesis and evolution of the "China threat" narrative. The legal perspective furnishes robust legal backing for China's involvement in Arctic affairs by citing international law and cultivates a positive national image through rule-based practices. The cartographic perspective views maps as crucial visual symbols and vehicles for spatial narratives, exploring how different map projections influence public spatial perception of the Arctic and their role in shaping China's Arctic identity. Collectively, these studies not only offer a deep dive into how China employs a variety of non-linguistic tools—such as identity positioning, tangible actions, legal arguments, and visual representations—to craft its Arctic image, but also underscore the significance and urgency of this endeavor.

3. Linguistics Perspectives on China's Arctic Image Research

Liang (2013) has observed that the construction of a national image is inextricably linked to the use of language; indeed, language is the ultimate medium for the articulation and formation of this image. A national image divorced from the linguistic dimension is ephemeral and elusive. In contrast to the "discursive turn" in international relations, research grounded in linguistics gives greater attention to the micro-level features of discourse. It predominantly employs discourse analysis and narrative analysis to uncover how China articulates its identity and intentions in Arctic affairs through official documents, academic discourse, and media reports.

3.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis research primarily utilizes theoretical frameworks and methodologies such as post-structuralist discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, eco-discourse analysis, framing theory, and corpus linguistics. It examines the construction of China's Arctic image within official, academic, and media discourse by analyzing dimensions like vocabulary and rhetorical devices. This approach seeks to reveal how language reflects national strategies, conveys standpoints, and molds external perceptions. The research focuses on three main areas: the construction of China's Arctic image in foreign discourse, the construction of China's Arctic image in Chinese discourse, and a comparative analysis of China's Arctic image in both domestic and international discourse.

Studies on the construction of China's Arctic image in foreign discourse primarily investigate how non-Chinese media, official bodies, and academic circles employ specific discursive strategies to shape China's Arctic image. Moscato (2018), using framing theory, analyzed reports on the *China's Arctic Policy* white paper by CNBC, the *Financial Times*, and the *South China Morning Post*. He found that these outlets tended to use an "identity conflict" discourse, portraying China as an ambitious actor, which reflects Western apprehension regarding China's intentions in the Arctic. Smárason and Ívar Vincent (2019) applied constructivism to encode reports from Icelandic newspapers *Morgunblaðið* and *Fréttablaðið*, finding that the overall portrayal of China's Arctic image was slightly more positive than negative. This may be attributable to Iceland's relatively neutral stance in Arctic affairs or its cooperative relationship with China. These studies highlight the diversity and complexity in the construction of China's Arctic image in media reports across different countries and regions, and they also point to the pivotal role of the media in shaping public perception.

Research on the construction of China's Arctic image in Chinese discourse centers on China's own official, academic, or media narratives, exploring how the nation proactively shapes its own Arctic image. Woon (2020), employing framing theory, critically examined the themes and rhetorical devices used by Chinese scholars in discussions of the "Polar Silk Road," revealing how China constructs its image as a positive international collaborator within this initiative. Lamazhapova (2024), through an analysis of keywords and collocations in Chinese official and academic discourse, uncovered multiple contradictions within China's Arctic image. Volpe (2023), taking journal articles from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) as his object of study, conducted an in-depth analysis of how Chinese academic elites comprehend and construct China's role, interests, and strategies in the Arctic Ocean, which indirectly sheds light on China's Arctic image and potential policy trajectories. Steiger (2022), using critical discourse analysis and a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, analyzed Arctic-related reports on the websites of the State Council and the Chinese government. He found that China's narrative on environmental and sustainable development has shifted from an earlier "humble and legitimacy-seeking" tone to a later "confident and even didactic" one. This reflects changes in China's international status and mindset and suggests that China's narrative on environmental and sustainable development may serve as a tool to gain the international community's endorsement of its interests, such as resource development.

Comparative analysis of China's Arctic image in domestic and foreign discourse aims to identify the similarities and differences in the construction of this image by contrasting Chinese and international narratives. This helps to better understand the cognitive dissonances and potential discursive conflicts between different actors. Salmi (2018), from a post-structuralist viewpoint, compared the Arctic discourse on Chinese and Japanese official websites, news reports, and speeches. The study found that both nations transcend geographical limitations through a "globalized Arctic" narrative. However, China emphasizes its "near-Arctic" status and peaceful cooperation, while Japan highlights its "maritime nation" identity and technological leadership. Furthermore, the fantasy logic of their Arctic discourses differs significantly: China's is a utopian narrative centered on a "community with a shared future for mankind," whereas Japan's is a dystopian narrative focused on "climate disaster warnings." Zhao (2023) used ecological discourse analysis to compare the linguistic features of CNN reports and the *China's Arctic Policy* white paper across five dimensions including international identity, geographical location, development status, Arctic international relations, and global environmental issues. The study found that CNN portrayed China as an "environmental destroyer," while the Chinese white paper emphasized the image of a "participant in ecological protection." This contrast starkly illustrates the divergent constructions of China's Arctic image on environmental issues by Western media and the Chinese government. Shi (2018), based on the attitude system of appraisal theory, conducted a systematic discourse analysis of reports on "Arctic climate change" in *China Daily* and *USA Today* from 2012 to 2016. The study revealed that *China Daily* employed more positive resources to construct a favorable image of China in the Arctic, while *USA Today* did the opposite. Wang (2020) also applied appraisal theory to analyze official documents and news reports related to Arctic affairs from EU member states and China, elucidating the differences in their Arctic images. The study found that the EU perceives itself as a normative power and attempts to occupy the moral and normative high ground in international affairs. In contrast, China extensively leverages its "near-Arctic state" status to justify the participation of environmental stakeholders (Wang, 2020). These comparative studies not only shed light on the diverse interpretations of China's Arctic image by different discursive actors but also offer a crucial linguistics perspective for understanding the discourse game in international relations.

3.2 Narrative Analysis

The narrative analysis perspective examines how China positions itself in official documents, policy statements, and media reports through narrative logic, constituent elements, and their evolution. Commonly used frameworks, such as strategic narrative theory and framing theory, aim to reveal how China employs narrative strategies to establish its identity, demonstrate legitimacy, shape a particular image, and ultimately reflect its national strategic intentions and changing international status.

Within this research paradigm, existing literature has primarily explored two dimensions. First, it investigates how China's official narrative constructs its Arctic identity and legitimacy, and how this narrative has evolved strategically over time. Second, it analyzes how Chinese media utilize diverse narrative frames to precisely communicate the Arctic image to different audiences. Regarding the evolution of China's official narrative, Parsons (2022), using narrative theory, conducted a deep analysis of the constituent elements and changes in the narrative of Arctic reports in the People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, and the official website of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations. This revealed that in its initial stages, China centered its discourse on "scientific exploration" and "common heritage" to seek legitimacy. Later, it gradually shifted to a discourse of "commercial participation" and "geo-economic strength" to enhance its presence. Allan (2018), applying strategic narrative theory to Chinese official discourse from 2012 to 2018, found that China systematically portrayed itself as a rule-abiding "legitimate stakeholder" and depicted the Arctic as a globalized space for open cooperation. Bouffard et al. (2024), also using strategic narrative theory, further examined Chinese official documents from 2019 to 2022 and analyzed the evolution of their narrative framework. They found that China's narrative has transitioned from an early, more moderate strategy emphasizing cooperation and "win-win" outcomes to the construction of a more confident "polar great power" identity. Particularly in the context of Russia's international isolation following the war in Ukraine, China has skillfully leveraged this situation to position itself as an indispensable and opportunistic actor in the region. Concerning the narrative strategies of Chinese media, Bērziņš (2022) applied framing theory to analyze the narrative frames used in reports by four Chinese English-language media outlets including *Xinhua News Agency*, *South China Morning Post*, *Global Times*, and *CGTN*. The study found that Chinese media did not adopt a monolithic strategy in constructing China's Arctic image. Instead, they used different and strategic narrative approaches for different Nordic countries to achieve more refined international communication effects.

In conclusion, research on the construction of China's Arctic image from a linguistics perspective not only examines the diverse interpretations of this image by foreign media, institutions, and academia but also scrutinizes the proactive and strategic nature of image construction in China's own discourse. Through comparative analysis, it reveals the cognitive disparities and discursive conflicts between domestic and international actors. These studies collectively paint a complex picture of how China's Arctic image is strategically shaped and interpreted in various discursive fields, underscoring the central role of language in the construction of national image.

4. Research Summary

Current research on the construction of China's Arctic image has made significant strides and yielded substantial results in both theory and practice.

In terms of theoretical contributions, previous studies have widely adopted and developed a variety of theoretical tools, such as constructivism, public diplomacy theory, discourse analysis theory, and strategic narrative theory. These have provided diverse explanatory frameworks for the construction of China's Arctic image. Although most research still predominantly draws on Western theories, some scholars have introduced localized concepts like "polar communication," "pan-Arctic community," and "Greater Arctic," as well as communication strategies that incorporate "He culture" (the culture of harmony). Additionally, some studies have tended to integrate different theories to form more robust analytical frameworks. For instance, the "discursive turn" in international relations and research from a linguistics perspective have been effectively linked, jointly exploring the interplay between discourse and practice. This trend suggests that researchers are increasingly recognizing the limitations of single-theory approaches and are striving to build more comprehensive theoretical models to explain the intricate process of Arctic image construction.

At the practical level, existing research has highlighted the roles of various actors in shaping China's Arctic image. State agencies and foreign policy are often seen as the primary forces in image construction. Large corporations and scientific research institutions influence China's Arctic image through their participation in collaborative projects and knowledge production. The mainstream media further constructs China's Arctic image through discourse and disseminates it to both domestic and international audiences. Moreover, research from legal and cartographic perspectives has also shed light on the roles of legal arguments and visual narratives in the construction of China's Arctic image.

Despite the fruitful outcomes of previous research on the construction of China's Arctic image, there are still some shortcomings.

First, there is a lack of analytical depth and contextual explanation from a linguistics perspective. Currently, academic research on the construction of China's Arctic image is mostly conducted within disciplines such as international relations and communication studies, with limited attention from a linguistic standpoint. Furthermore, existing linguistic research has predominantly focused on the role of government, mainstream media, and academic discourse in national image construction,

with insufficient attention given to the discourse of think tanks. As significant producers of knowledge and influencers of policy, the research reports and policy recommendations issued by think tanks play an undeniable role in shaping the international community's perception of China's Arctic image. Additionally, there is a lack of in-depth contextual explanation. While most linguistic studies can effectively analyze the discursive strategies employed in different narratives, they seldom place these strategies within a broader social, cultural, historical, and political context to explain why these discourse producers use specific strategies to construct a particular image of China in the Arctic.

Second, there is insufficient focus on the diversity of actors and the investigation of their interaction mechanisms. Existing research has mainly concentrated on the influence of traditional actors such as the state, government officials, mainstream media, large corporation, and scholars on the construction of China's Arctic image. However, in the increasingly diversified global communication landscape, the role of non-traditional actors like social media, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens in information dissemination and image shaping is becoming more prominent. The current literature lacks a systematic and in-depth investigation of the specific roles of these emerging actors in image construction, their interaction mechanisms, and how they collectively or independently influence China's Arctic image. Overlooking these diverse actors may lead to an incomplete understanding of the overall picture of the construction of China's Arctic image.

Third, the depth and breadth of quantitative and empirical analysis need to be enhanced. Existing research is mostly qualitative, employing methods such as case studies and historical analysis to reveal the logic and strategies behind the construction of China's Arctic image. However, the application of quantitative research methods, such as data mining and corpus analysis, is still lacking.

The construction of China's Arctic image is a dynamic and complex systematic project involving multiple dimensions, including international politics, communication, and legal norms. Existing research has provided a valuable theoretical and empirical foundation for our understanding of this process. However, in the face of the increasingly complex geopolitical landscape and international public opinion environment in the Arctic region, the construction of China's Arctic image continues to face numerous challenges. Future research should build on the existing foundation and conduct in-depth investigations in the following three areas. First, it should deepen the depth and breadth of linguistic discourse analysis, not only by expanding the analysis of new types of linguistic texts but also by placing discursive strategies in a broader socio-cultural, historical, and political context for explanation, and by exploring the underlying motivations behind specific discourse choices. Second, it should broaden the scope of actors under consideration and systematically investigate the roles of diverse actors such as social media, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and individual citizens in image construction and their interaction mechanisms. Finally, it should increase the use of quantitative analysis to enhance the rigor of the research.

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