

摘 要

随着数字经济成为保持经济活力的关键经济形式，独角兽通常被视为新技术的先驱。作为拥有独角兽公司数量第二多的国家，中国正以其强大的人才储备和商业环境影响着世界。中国独角兽公司正走出国门，积极拓展海外市场。信息技术的发展使得企业可以通过网站等多种渠道进行信息传播和身份构建，与受众建立联系。因此，在中国独角兽公司国际化进程中，面向海外的身份构建策略尤为重要。本文结合语篇-历史研究框架，企业传播策略以及霍夫斯泰德文化维度理论，从宏观主题、中观企业传播战略和微观词汇三个维度，比较了中美两国独角兽企业在网站概况中的身份构建策略。

本研究发现，受互联网企业的行业特点影响，两国的独角兽企业都强调技术属性。受集体主义、男性化、权力距离文化因素影响，中国独角兽企业身份话语较为重视企业悠久历史、行业地位、自身竞争力、国家归属等主题内容，倾向于表现行业领导者的形象来强调自身竞争力，而美国独角兽企业因受个人主义和男性化文化影响，重视个人主题内容，更倾向于给观众一个亲切、有社会责任的贡献者形象。在企业传播层面，两国企业均使用了混合传播策略。中企倾向于采取企业能力传播策略；美企优先考虑企业社会责任传播策略。在微观层面，中企使用等级性和非个人化的沟通方式，更直接地提及公司；而美企则更喜欢对话式和个人化的沟通方式，更多地使用第一人称代词来与受众建立更紧密的关系。本研究根据研究结果，提出了改进中国企业英文网站建设的建议。这些建议包括加强企业社会责任行动的信息披露，加强情感联系和互动性，以及考虑受众的文化背景和接受程度。对两国企业身份建构策略的探讨有助于提高中企的英文网站建设、对外宣传身份建设以及企业的国际传播能力。

关键词：企业形象；身份构建；语料库；文化维度；语篇-历史分析方法

Abstract

With the digital economy becoming a key economic form to maintain economic vitality, Unicorns are often seen as pioneers of new technologies. China, as the country with the second-largest number of unicorn companies, is influencing the world with its strong talent reserves and business environment. Chinese unicorn companies are venturing abroad and actively expanding overseas markets. Therefore, in the nationalization process of Chinese unicorn companies, identity construction aimed at overseas markets is particularly important. This study compares the discursive strategies adopted by Chinese and American unicorn companies from their website profiles by applying Discourse-Historical Approach at dimensions of macro themes, meso communication strategies and micro lexical patterns with the use of the corpus linguistic tool Wmatrix.

This study found that, influenced by the characteristics of the internet industry, unicorn companies in both countries emphasize their technological attributes. However, Chinese unicorn companies tend to emphasize their competitiveness by portraying themselves as industry leaders due to the influence of collectivism, masculinity, and high power distance, while American companies tend to present a friendly, socially responsible image to their audience due to the influence of individualism and masculinity. Based on the research results, this study proposes suggestions for improving the construction of English websites for Chinese companies. The differences and similarities in discursive strategy between the two countries have important practical implications for improving the English-language website construction, and the external publicity identity construction of Chinese enterprises.

Keywords: Corporate identity; Discursive strategies; Corpus; Cultural dimensions; Discourse-Historical Approach

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Need for the study

In the context of the COVID-19 epidemic sweeping the world, the digital economy has become a key economic form to maintain economic vitality and ensure the smooth flow of the supply chain of the industrial chain, and countries have regarded the development of the digital economy as a major strategic opportunity (Zhao, 2021). The emergence of clusters of "unicorn" enterprises is a unique phenomenon in the development of entrepreneurial enterprises in the digital economy (Zhang, 2021). The term *unicorn* was first coined by venture capitalist Aileen Lee and refers to innovative startups that are less than 10 years old and have a market valuation of more than \$1 billion. As entrepreneurial companies, unicorns are often seen as pioneers of new technologies, disruptors of traditional industries, and leaders of the new economy (Duan & Li, 2019). According to the Global Unicorn Index 2022 Half-Year Report released by Hurun Research Institute, the USA and China dominate 80% of the total unicorn enterprises, with 625 unicorns in the USA and 312 unicorns in China. Unicorns are the hallmark of a world-class entrepreneurial ecosystem. The more unicorns a country has, the stronger its innovation ability and the more complete its entrepreneurial ecology. Moreover, in the Digital Economy 2021 China Unicorn Study released by Accenture, 45% of unicorns consider overseas expansion to be critical, and 82% of them plan to go overseas within 24 months. These start-up ecosystems make full use of the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, applying social media networking and websites to make connections with audiences from all over the world. As the country with the second-largest number of unicorns, China is influencing the world with its strong talent pool and business environment. And these Chinese unicorns are going global for a wider market.

Corporate websites have been recognized as global channels to convey corporate messages (Gatti, 2011), platforms for identity demonstration (Shi & Shan, 2019), and cultural manifestation (Moura, Singh, & Chun, 2016). It is found that a corporate website is an important platform for informing the public of its performance and other

corporate-related information and for shaping a positive corporate image (Ingenhoff & Fuhrer, 2010). Building a positive corporate identity can provide numerous benefits to organizations, including increased competitiveness and profitability, and a greater ability to attract customers, investors, and talented employees (Walker, 2010). In order to better connect with the international community and project a positive corporate image, English-language websites designed by Chinese companies are a window for them to introduce themselves to the world.

Although research on corporate identity construction has been carried out since the 1990s, the relevant research has mostly been conducted from the perspective of business, with relatively little empirical research relying on linguistic theory and methods. In recent years, domestic linguistic researchers have paid much attention to corporate identity, studying corporate identity construction from website introductions (Wu, 2019; Shi & Cheng, 2021), annual reports (Wu & Zhang, 2022; Miao & Li, 2022), and social responsibility reports (Hu & Sheng, 2020). However, compared to traditional large-scale enterprises, less effort has been put into the study of start-up ecosystems like unicorns. In the context of the national efforts to promote Chinese enterprises to go global, it is worthwhile to pay academic attention to how Chinese companies, especially those unicorn startups, can raise awareness overseas by communicating their identity to international audiences.

In order to identify the discursive strategies adopted by Chinese and American unicorns, this study is intended to employ the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to conduct a study on the company profiles of the unicorns by referring to the framework adopted by Shi and Cheng (2021). In particular, the corpus tool Wmatrix will be used to compare the similarities and differences in discursive construction in the website profiles of Chinese and American unicorn companies on three levels: that is the macro themes, the meso communication strategies, and the micro lexical patterns. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory (2010) is used to evaluate how US and Chinese corporate websites are influenced by cultural dimensions.

1.2 Significance of the study

This study represents both a theoretical and empirical effort to apply the integrated DHA framework in examining the presentation of corporate identity on corporate websites. It may indicate the feasibility of the framework developed by Shi

and Cheng (2021), and its practicability may enrich and expand the perspectives of identity research.

As for practical significance, this study investigates the similarities and differences in the identity construction of Chinese and American unicorns' websites from different levels. On one hand, it is helpful to understand the current status of identity construction on Chinese unicorns' websites and whether enterprises have made cross-cultural adaptations for foreign audiences. On the other hand, the research results can provide reference for further optimizing the construction of English official websites of Chinese enterprises, and improving the international discourse ability of Chinese enterprises.

1.3 Structure of thesis

This thesis is presented on the following ground. It sets out to demonstrate the needs of the present study, the significance of the study, and the outline of this thesis. Chapter Two introduces the basic concepts and theories presented in the thesis and provides a limited yet focused review on corporate identity construction, corporate communication, and the Discourse-Historical Approach. The research design is illustrated in Chapter Three. In this section, three research questions are raised as to the ultimately adopted framework for the construction of corporate identity carried out by Chinese and American unicorns. The description of data, research methods, and the procedure are illustrated in detail. Results and discussion are shown in Chapter Four. A three-dimensional analysis is presented in accordance with the research questions. Lastly, conclusions of major findings are summarized and the limitations and prospects of further research are pointed out.

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