



Communication status and optimization strategies of China's belt and road initiative to Vietnam: a case study of CRI online Vietnamese version

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Abstract This study examines the news reports concerning the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) published by the Vietnamese-language news website of CRI Online (vietnamese.cri.cn) from 2020 to 2024 as the objects of analysis (n = 405). Applying content analysis, it examines the characteristics of these reports in terms of quantity, genre, information sources, themes, relevance and sentiment, and further delves into their narrative strategies across various domains including political diplomacy, economy, and transportation infrastructure development. The research reveals that CRI's Vietnamese version seeks to construct a favorable image of the BRI, highlighting its positive contributions to global connectivity, regional economic growth, and the improvement of livelihoods. However, there is still potential for optimization in strategies concerning source selection, narrative voice, and responses to controversies. To enhance the effectiveness of precision communication to Vietnam, it is recommended to increase the reliability of reports, optimize localized expression, and pay attention to the art of communication.

Keywords Precision communication · Vietnam · CRI online vietnamese version · Belt and road initiative (BRI) · International communication

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Introduction

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the significant initiative of jointly building the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (hereinafter referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative or BRI) in 2013. As a major initiative of China to expand opening-up, the Belt and Road Initiative, after more than a decade of development, has seen over 150 countries and 30 international organizations sign cooperation agreements on jointly building the Belt and Road (Wu & Cui 2025). It has evolved into a robust international platform for economic cooperation with significant global influence. This initiative aims to build a comprehensive, multi-layered, and composite interconnectivity network by strengthening policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China 2015). On one hand, the initiative is regarded as a grand vision for China to deeply participate in global governance and promote the establishing of a community with a shared future for mankind. On the other hand, it is also poised to have a far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of countries along the routes and the regional cooperation landscape. Therefore, the proposal of the BRI signifies that China, under new historical conditions, is actively and proactively participating in international affairs and attempting to promote the reconstruction of the international order (Du 2020).

In the process of promoting the BRI, media and international communication play an indispensable and crucial role (Zhang 2017). Effective international communication is the core means of interpreting the initiative’s connotations, enhancing understanding and mutual trust, arousing cooperation consensus, dispelling doubts and misjudgments, and shaping a favorable international public opinion environment. Amidst the ongoing turbulence in the international landscape, intensifying geopolitical conflicts, and rapid advancements in information dissemination technology, the risk of disorder and cognitive confrontation in the global information field is escalating. Meanwhile, the rise of countries in the “Global South” has propelled the international communication landscape into a period of structural restructuring, impacting the traditional global communication order centered around Western countries. The emergence of these new issues compels China to adjust its traditional international communication methods and strategies to adapt to the ever-changing international environment. Under current circumstances, China has increasingly emphasized the application of “precision communication” strategies in its international communication practices. This involves formulating and implementing differentiated communication plans that are more targeted, affable, and resonant, by considering the cultural backgrounds, information reception habits, points of interest, and cognitive differences of different countries and diverse audiences, so as to enhance communication effectiveness and international audience identification (Liu & Jiang 2022). The proposal and practice of precision communication strategies are precisely China’s strategic response to the complex international public opinion ecosystem and its efforts to enhance the BRI’s discursive appeal and international acceptance.

In recent years, the China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership has generally maintained a rapid development momentum under high-level strategic guidance. Through frequent high-level exchanges and institutionalized dialogues, Vietnam and China have signed and issued a series of important joint statements and bilateral cooperation documents. In 2025, the two sides proposed to accelerate the building of a strategic China-Vietnam community with a shared future. As an important country along the route of the BRI, and on the basis of a solid political cooperation framework, China has also continuously carried out international communication work related to the BRI towards Vietnam (Zhang & Sang 2025). This communication behavior is not only an inherent requirement for enhancing China's image as a responsible major power on the regional and international stage, but also an important way to promote a comprehensive and in-depth understanding among all sectors of Vietnamese society regarding the connotations, opportunities, and challenges of the BRI. Effective international communication contributes to enhancing understanding, reducing misjudgments, and arousing consensus, thereby creating a favorable public opinion foundation and atmosphere for the smooth advancement of bilateral cooperation. Therefore, a systematic investigation and analysis of the current strategic practices, specific paths, and communication effects of China's precision communication of the BRI to Vietnam holds significant theoretical value and practical urgency. This research, adopting a Vietnamese local perspective and based on framing theory, employs content analysis to examine news reports on the BRI published by Vietnamese-language news website of CRI Online (vietnamese.cri.cn) between 2020 and 2024. The analysis will be conducted from micro, meso, and macro perspectives. This study aims to provide a localized perspective and in-depth insights for accurately grasping the actual landing effect and user reception of Chinese media's international communication to Vietnam.

Literature review

Framing theory

Since its rise in the 1970s, framing theory has become a prominent topic in the field of journalism and communication research. The origins of framing theory are generally considered traceable to two major intellectual lineages (Pan & Kosicki 1993). One, originating from a sociological perspective, defines frames as the psychological principles and subjective cognitive processes individuals use to understand social situations and react accordingly, based on organized daily experiences. It emphasizes how individuals construct and interpret social reality through frames (Goffman 1974). The other is rooted in cognitive psychology, where a frame is a hypothetical construct concerning individual cognitive processes, positing that knowledge is stored in memory in the form of specific data structures (Minsky 1974). Despite their different paths, both perspectives highlight the core function of frames: serving as fundamental tools for people to cognize and interpret the external world. Subsequently, the concept of framing was introduced into journalism and communication research, giving rise to "media frames". Researchers regarding media frames as a

key strategy for journalists use to “package” complex information, thereby transmitting it more effectively to the audience (Gitlin 1980). The operation of a frame involves two levels: “boundaries” and “architecture.” The former relates to the news workers’ definition of the scope of sourcing and the delimitation of issue boundaries; the latter refers to the internal cognitive structures people use to interpret the external world (Gamson & Modigliani 1989). Some scholars also argue that a frame is essentially an individual’s selective perception of the real world, making it salient in the communication text, and thereby defining problems, interpreting causality, making moral evaluations, or suggesting treatments for the described items from a particular angle (Entman 1993).

At present, framing theory has been widely applied in research on news reporting, becoming an effective research path for comprehensively analyzing the principles of news construction and meaning-making (Zou 2023). With text analysis at its core, it can reveal the connection between text and social concepts within dynamic social relations (Pan 2006). News frames can be detailed into three levels: macro, meso, and micro. The macro level defines the theme of the news event; the meso level deals with the selection and organization of the report’s content; and the micro level focuses on the linguistic expression of the frame (Zang 1999). In other words, news frames are primarily manifested through the presentation of textual content, such as keywords, language use, information sources, and news schemata. Researchers can reveal specific news frames by examining the syntactic structure, script structure, thematic structure, or rhetorical structure of news reports, or by extracting the emphasis of speakers’ narratives or discussions on a particular news event or issue (Pan & Kosicki 1993; Nelson et al. 1997), ultimately uncovering the constructive thinking behind news metaphors (Schlesinger & Lau 2000).

Communication of the belt and road initiative

Research on international communication activities related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has also become a prominent topic in the field of international communication studies in recent years. Existing achievements generally focus on how the BRI is presented, interpreted, and framed in international media and political discourse, and explore various factors influencing public perception. These studies reveal that BRI narratives exhibit significant diversity, complexity, and even opposition in different national contexts and media ecosystems, and are influenced by factors such as national geopolitical interests, economic considerations, and ideological stances. For example, the BRI narratives presented in US and Indian media tend to emphasize “risks” rather than “opportunities,” highlighting its potential threats and negative impacts (Jan et al. 2018; Niu & Relly 2021). This forms a stark contrast with the BRI reporting in Chinese media outlets like China Daily and CGTN (China Global Television Network) (Teo & Xu 2023). In contrast, Vietnamese media’s attitude towards the BRI has not shown significant negative evaluations (Gu & Lan 2018), but has also experienced a specific shift from “skepticism” to “cautious welcome,” and from “avoidance” to “cooperation” (Gu 2016; Wu 2022).

In summary, research on the current situation and implementation strategies of China's precision communication of the BRI to Vietnam is highly necessary and urgent. Against the backdrop of diverse and complex global information, Vietnam needs to effectively filter and discern various information sources, resist potential biased narratives, and more profoundly understand the specific connotations, opportunities, and challenges of the initiative for Vietnam.

Research design and methodology

This study selects the Vietnamese version of China Radio International (CRI) Online (vietnamese.cri.cn), a key national-level external communication news website hosted by China Media Group (CMG) with international communication as its core positioning, as the object of investigation. Since its establishment in 1998, this platform has developed into an internationalized new media flagship with multi-language coverage (including Vietnamese). Its Vietnamese version serves as an important window for China to convey official stances and expound Chinese perspectives to the Vietnamese audience. The time span for this research is set from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024. Using "Belt, Road" (the Vietnamese equivalent being "Vành đai, Con đường") as the keyword, a comprehensive search was conducted on the Vietnamese version of this website, yielding a total of 405 relevant news reports as the analysis sample.

This study primarily adopts content analysis as its research method, drawing upon the analytical perspective of framing theory to systematically examine the collected samples. Content analysis is an objective, systematic, and quantitative method for describing manifest communication content. In journalism and communication studies, content analysis has high applicability. Specifically, this research focuses on three levels of the news frame: First, the macro level, analyzing the volume of reports, report genres, report themes, information sources, the relevance of reports to the "Belt and Road" Initiative, and report sentiment. Second, the meso level, deeply analyzing how this media outlet presents the image of the Belt and Road Initiative to Vietnam and the emphasis of its content. Third, the micro level, paying attention to the linguistic strategies in the reports' Vietnamese expression, narrative tone, and responses to controversies, and interpreting these in conjunction with the local Vietnamese cultural context and audience psychology. Building on this, this study not only strives to objectively present the current status and characteristics of CRI online Vietnamese version's communication of the "Belt and Road" Initiative but also endeavors to explore potential limitations in its reporting techniques and language use. It aims to propose targeted and actionable enhancement strategies, thereby contributing academic insights towards optimizing the effectiveness of China's precision communication of the Belt and Road Initiative to Vietnam and enhancing understanding and mutual trust between Vietnam and China.

The coding of news reports was independently completed by two trained coders, and Cohen's Kappa inter-coder reliability test was used to measure the internal consistency between coders. Upon testing, the Cohen's Kappa coefficient for the coded

categories was above 0.7. Therefore, it can be determined that the content analysis coding categories adopted in this research meet reliability testing requirements.

Research findings

Macro-level: overall characteristics of the belt and road initiative reporting

Report volume and temporal distribution

Overall, from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, CRI's Vietnamese language website published a total of 405 reports related to the Belt and Road Initiative. In terms of temporal distribution, the volume of reports showed a clear dynamic change: 12 reports in 2020, increasing to 37 in 2021, further jumping to 76 in 2022, reaching a significant peak of 156 reports in 2023, and then slightly decreasing to 124 reports in 2024, though still maintaining a relatively high level.

Research findings indicate that the lower volume of reports in 2020 and 2021 is directly related to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to a slowdown in the advancement of international cooperation projects and also caused a shift in media reporting priorities. From 2021 to 2023, the volume of reports increased significantly year by year, reflecting China's intensified efforts in international communication and multilateral cooperation promotion of the BRI in the post-pandemic period. Notably, 2023, as a crucial milestone marking the tenth anniversary of the BRI proposal, saw China host a series of high-profile events, including the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. These events greatly increased the reporting fervor on the BRI. Consequently, related reports, such as those concerning high-level visits between Vietnam and China, strategic consensus reached by both sides, and bilateral cooperation on BRI, began to appear frequently on CRI's Vietnamese language website, leading to the peak in report numbers in recent years. The moderate decline in report volume in 2024 can be seen as a natural adjustment after a promotional peak. However, judging by the total number of reports for that year, it still far exceeded the levels of the 2020–2022 period. This indicates that the “Belt and Road” Initiative remains a sustained key topic in China's communication agenda towards Vietnam (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of Reports Related to the “Belt and Road” Initiative from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Year	Number of reports (articles)
2020	12
2021	37
2022	76
2023	156
2024	124
Total	405

Report genre

Further analysis of the genres of the 405 collected “Belt and Road” Initiative-related reports reveals that hard news totaled 278 pieces, holding a significant dominant position and accounting for approximately 69% of the total sample. This indicates that in its international communication regarding the “Belt and Road” Initiative, CRI’s Vietnamese version prioritizes the timely and rapid dissemination of related events reports, actively following up on project progress and official updates, and other basic information. In-depth reports amounted to 73 pieces, representing 18% of the total. This genre primarily serves to provide detailed background and analytical content, which can, to a certain extent, help the Vietnamese individuals better understand the connotations of the “Belt and Road” Initiative. Commentary articles totaled 43 pieces, about 10%, and interview articles totaled 11 pieces, about 3%. In these two types of reports, the commentators and interviewees are mostly high-ranking state officials or experts from government departments and academic institutions. Although fewer in overall number, these two categories of reports respectively undertake the specific functions of articulating stances, guiding opinions, and conveying authoritative voices. Overall, this distribution of report genres, characterized by a predominance of instant news supplemented by in-depth interpretations and a small number of opinion-guiding pieces, reflects a communication feature based on information dissemination, while also incorporating a certain depth of interpretation (Table 2).

Information sources

An analysis of the information sources for the 405 reports reveals a significant concentration in their distribution. Among the various information sources, other Chinese media and official institutions hold an absolute dominant position, with 256 reports directly citing or translating from these channels, accounting for a high proportion of 63%. In contrast, reports citing foreign media and foreign official institutions (including Vietnam) as sources numbered 137, approximately 34%. The inclusion of these latter sources is often to reflect an international perspective in reporting, to corroborate cooperation achievements by citing viewpoints from “Belt and Road” Initiative partner countries or third parties, thereby increasing the diversity and persuasiveness of the reports. Furthermore, news reports originating from netizen comments or public opinions from societal groups amounted to only 12,

Table 2 Genre of Reports Related to the Belt and Road Initiative from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Report genre	Number of reports	Percentage
Hard news	278	69%
In-depth report	73	18%
Commentary	43	10%
Interview	11	3%
Total	405	100%

Table 3 Information sources for reports related to the belt and road initiative from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Information sources	Number of reports	Percentage
Chinese media and official institutions	256	63
Foreign media and foreign official institutions	137	34
Netizen comments or public opinions	12	3
Total	405	100

Table 4 Relevance of reports related to the belt and road initiative from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Relevance of reports	Number of reports	Percentage
High	203	50
Medium	90	22
Low	112	28
Total	405	100

accounting for about 3% and occupying a marginal position. This indicates that CRI online Vietnamese version's "Belt and Road" Initiative reporting is highly focused on official narratives and macro-level projects, with relatively limited presentation of grassroots perspectives and individual experiences. Overall, this source structure, dominated by Chinese official sources, supplemented by foreign official sources, and with minimal inclusion of public voices, clearly reflects CRI online Vietnamese version's strategic inclination as a Chinese state media outlet towards authoritative dissemination, official narratives, and consideration of international perspectives in its "Belt and Road" Initiative international communication (Table 3).

Relevance and report themes

Among the 405 reports, those with high relevance to the BRI (directly and in-depth discussing the projects themselves, related policies, or cooperation progress) numbered 203, accounting for approximately 50% of the total. Reports with medium relevance, where the "Belt and Road" Initiative was an important background or component, totaled 90, accounted for 22%. Meanwhile, reports with low relevance, where it was only a secondary element or mentioned in passing, amounted to 112, approximately 28%. This indicates that in half of the BRI-related reports by CRI online Vietnamese version, the initiative was treated as a core issue for focused reporting, while the other half considered it as a background or related factor in broader topics.

Cross-analyzing report relevance with report themes provides clearer insights into the strategic emphasis of CRI Vietnamese version's communication (Table 4).

First, **Politics and diplomacy** themed reports totaled 213, the highest number for any theme, but the relevance distribution was relatively balanced (High: 81, Medium: 70, Low: 66). This reflects that in reports on high-level interactions between Vietnam and China, or involving multiple parties, and in political relations

coverage, the BRI could be discussed as a core issue. It was also often mentioned as a component reflecting the willingness for China-foreign strategic alignment, or as part of regional and global cooperation frameworks, even if the main focus of the report's content was not the BRI itself.

Second, **Transportation and infrastructure construction** themed reports were 47. These reports exhibited extremely high relevance (High: 45, Medium: 2, Low: 0). Transportation and infrastructure construction are the core pillars and most direct manifestations of the Belt and Road Initiative, and related reports often focused on specific project planning, progress, and the expected benefits of interconnectivity.

Third, **Economy** themed reports were 73, with high-relevance reports being predominant at 37, accounting for approximately 51% of reports in this category. This indicates that when discussing economic and trade cooperation, investment projects, or cross-border tourism, the BRI was often presented as a key driving force or cooperation platform. Medium and low relevance reports suggest that while some economic topics were related to the BRI, the content itself focused more on macro-economic situations or specific industry dynamics, with the BRI mentioned only as background.

Fourth, **Culture and people-to-people exchange** themed reports were 35, with high-relevance reports accounting for 26, or about 74% of this category. This shows that when reporting on "people-to-people connectivity" related activities, existing news reports tended to explicitly link bilateral cultural exchanges with the BRI, highlighting humanistic values and serving the communication goal of enhancing understanding and seeking resonance.

Fifth, other themes such as **Military, society, healthcare, environment, technology, and education** had fewer reports overall, with varied relevance distributions, making it difficult to identify significant patterns. However, generally, these themes featured more low-relevance reports, indicating that the BRI was mostly mentioned as a background element in these reports.

In summary, CRI online Vietnamese version's reporting on the Belt and Road Initiative demonstrates a clear stratification in its communication strategy. In fields directly or highly related to the BRI, such as infrastructure construction, economic cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges, it adopts high-relevance, focused reporting, highlighting the initiative's content and cooperation achievements. In reports on politics and diplomacy, it employs varying degrees of relevance depending on the specific situation, both highlighting key aspects and "embedding" the BRI into broader frameworks of China-foreign relations, portraying it as a cooperative initiative with significant mutual benefits (Table 5).

Report sentiment/tendency

Overall, among the 405 reports, positive reports reached a high amount of 395, accounting for approximately 97.5%. This data significantly reflects CRI online Vietnamese version's core strategic positioning and communication orientation as an official Chinese media outlet, actively shaping a positive image and transmitting positive signals in its international communication of the Belt and Road Initiative. Neutral reports were only 1, accounting for about 0.2%, while negative reports also

Table 5 Themes of Reports Related to the Belt and Road Initiative and Their Relevance from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Themes of reports	High relevance	Medium relevance	Low relevance	Total
Politics and diplomacy	81	66	66	213
Transportation and infrastructure construction	45	2	0	47
Economy	37	15	21	73
Culture and people-to-people exchange	26	3	6	35
Society, healthcare, environment	7	0	11	18
Technology	6	2	5	13
Military	0	2	1	3
Education	1	0	2	3
Total	203	90	112	405

numbered only 9, or about 2.2%, and were primarily concentrated in the political, diplomatic, and economic domains. The appearance of neutral and negative reports served the purpose of necessarily addressing certain controversial topics or responding to external negative voices, but it did not alter the overall positive tone.

When combined with specific report themes, this study found that this positive tendency manifested even more significantly. First, in reports themed on Politics and Diplomacy, positive reports were 209, accounting for a high portion of 98.1%. This indicates that when dealing with core issues such as high-level interactions between Vietnam and China, political alignment, and strategic cooperation, CRI online Vietnamese version almost entirely adopted a positive framing strategy, emphasizing cooperation consensus and shared interests. There were 4 negative reports, mainly responding to or refuting some inherent disagreements and external negative interpretations of the Belt and Road Initiative. Such reports were very few and basically did not affect the overall positive framing. Second, Economy themed reports were 73, of which 69 were positive, accounting for about 94.5%. The content tended to emphasize the economic opportunities, trade growth, investment facilitation, and tourism development prospects brought by the Belt and Road Initiative. The 4 negative reports, on the other hand, refuted potential economic investment risks, debt issues, and challenges encountered during project execution. Third, Transportation and Infrastructure themed reports were 47, Culture and People-to-people Exchange themed reports were 35, Society, Healthcare, and Environment themed reports were 18, Technology themed reports were 13, Education themed reports were 3, and Military themed reports were 3. The aforementioned reports generally exhibited a significant positive tendency, once again confirming that CRI online Vietnamese version, in its communication of the Belt and Road Initiative to Vietnam, adopted a parallel strategy of “hard connectivity” (infrastructure) and “soft connectivity” (people-to-people bonds), presenting the “Belt and Road” as an initiative comprehensively covering various fields. Particularly in transportation and infrastructure construction, as a landmark achievement of the Belt and Road Initiative, it effectively highlighted the “visibly successful” outcomes of the initiative.

In conclusion, CRI online Vietnamese version, in its process of communicating the Belt and Road Initiative to Vietnam, adopted a reporting strategy dominated by a positive tendency. Through a large number of positive reports, it emphasized cooperation opportunities, common development, and mutual benefits, striving to shape a good image of the Belt and Road Initiative among the Vietnamese public, enhance understanding and support, and create a favorable public opinion for the smooth advancement of the initiative locally. The presence of a very small number of negative and neutral reports was more of a strategic embellishment or a limited reflection of complex realities, and did not affect the overall positive framing. This reporting strategy is also consistent with the typical characteristics of Chinese official media in major external communication strategies (Table 6).

Meso-level: the win–win model of the belt and road initiative and china’s firm discourse

Political and diplomatic relations: cooperation and competition

A deep analysis of CRI online Vietnamese version’s reports on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reveals that in narratives concerning diplomatic activities, the construction of relations between China and various countries worldwide, particularly those along the BRI routes and in specific regions, occupies a central position. It is noteworthy that in these political and diplomatic themed reports, most of the countries highlighted for their positive cooperative attitudes are developing countries or emerging economies. This aligns highly with the BRI’s core objectives of promoting infrastructure development, regional interconnectivity, and providing development opportunities for developing nations. By showcasing these countries’ active responses and participation in the BRI in its reports, CRI aims to shape a positive image of China as a responsible major power promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and achieving common prosperity through the BRI.

At the same time, reports concerning the BRI exhibit broad global coverage in their narratives, extending to Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and other

Table 6 Sentiment of reports related to the belt and road initiative from 2020 to 2024 (articles)

Themes of reports	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Politics and diplomacy	209	0	4	213
Transportation and infrastructure construction	47	0	0	47
Economy	69	0	4	73
Culture and people-to-people exchange	34	1	0	35
Society, healthcare, environment	18	0	0	18
Technology	13	0	0	13
Military	2	0	1	3
Education	3	0	0	3
Total	395	1	9	405

regions. Among these, relations with Southeast Asian nations, especially Vietnam, are undoubtedly prominent content, and attempts are made to portray Vietnam as a demonstration zone for international cooperation under the BRI. Reports frequently feature leaders of China and Southeast Asian countries aligning their strategies with the BRI, showcasing a positive attitude of mutual need for cooperation. For example, a report published on January 12, 2021, titled “China Hopes to Elevate Relations with ASEAN Countries to a New Level”, quoted that Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian emphasizing that Southeast Asian countries are China’s friendly neighbors and key partners in jointly building the BRI. In a report dated October 8, 2022, titled “Vietnamese Scholar: Global Development Initiative Makes China-ASEAN Relations Closer”, the perspective of Dr. Nguyen Huy Hoang, Director of the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, was highlighted, emphasizing that China’s proposed Global Development Initiative reflects China’s hope to share future development achievements with foreign countries and can also strengthen relations between China and Southeast Asian countries. Furthermore, CRI online Vietnamese version also describes China-Vietnam relations as a top priority for the effective promotion of the BRI in Southeast Asia. These reports not only detail the important consensus reached by leaders of both countries on strategically aligning the BRI with the “Two Corridors, One Economic Belt” initiative in various bilateral and multilateral settings but also heavily emphasize the close ties between China and Vietnam during this period, describing it as a “honeymoon period” for bilateral friendship. This focus aims to highlight the special friendly relationship between China and Vietnam as “comrades plus brothers” and the broad prospects and exemplary effect of cooperation under the BRI framework. Beyond Southeast Asia, such reports also actively present the extension and expansion of the BRI in some European countries like Germany, Greece, Latin American countries like Brazil and Argentina, as well as countries in West Asia and the African continent. These reports similarly focus on high-level mutual visits, strategic dialogues between China and these nations, and expressions of positive willingness and specific plans to strengthen cooperation under the BRI framework.

Concurrently, in CRI online Vietnamese version’s BRI-related reports, the United States and Japan are also mentioned, but their roles are distinctly different from the aforementioned developing countries actively engaged in cooperation. Taking the United States as an example, CRI online Vietnamese version’s reports often reveal its critical stance on the BRI and its attempts to exert negative influence. A report on November 24, 2021, titled “US’s Attempt to Drive a Wedge in China-Africa Relations is Particularly Laughable and Futile”, refuted that US Secretary of State Blinken’s insinuation during his Africa visit that the BRI led to debt problems for African countries, and cited the views of the Nigerian Foreign Minister and South African media, emphasizing African countries’ right to independently choose partners and their recognition of the achievements of China-Africa cooperation. And in a report dated September 23, 2024, titled “Behind the US Plan to Invest an Additional \$1.6 Billion in its ‘Cognitive War’ with China”, it was pointed out that the US was attempting to invest heavily to wage a “cognitive war” against China, with a key target for discrediting being the BRI. The report interpreted this move as a

manifestation of America's "hegemonic anxiety" and the "ruling party's scramble for political capital", and stressed that "smearing and suppression cannot hinder China's development". In contrast, Japan, in the reports, is sometimes assigned a similar role to that of the United States, exhibiting a certain counterbalancing posture against the BRI. In a report dated May 27, 2022, titled "Some Japanese Politicians 'Fawning Over the US and Betraying Asia' Are Daydreaming", comments were made on the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) summit held in May of the same year, pointing out that Japanese media claimed the summit targeted China in military and infrastructure aspects, and announced that they would provide over \$50 billion in infrastructure investment to the Asia-Pacific region in the next five years, with a clear intention to counter the BRI. CRI's report refuted this, arguing that it would be difficult to form an "Asian version of NATO", that its infrastructure investment amount was far from sufficient, and criticized Japanese right-wing forces for cooperating with the US "Indo-Pacific strategy" as "inviting a wolf into the house".

Economic narrative: global vision, regional deepening, and discursive engagement

Since its proposal, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with its grand vision of promoting the orderly free flow of economic factors, efficient resource allocation, and deep market integration, has garnered widespread global attention. In CRI online Vietnamese version's relevant reports, economic cooperation undoubtedly represents a key aspect for showcasing this initiative's core value and practical achievements.

First, from a global perspective, the BRI is committed to building an economic cooperation network that transcends geographical boundaries and connects various regions. The initiative, through large-scale infrastructure investment, has improved the level of interconnectivity in countries and regions along the routes, reduced trade costs, and injected new vitality into global economic growth. CRI online Vietnamese version's reports also indirectly echo this global vision. A report on November 4, 2020, titled 'Belt and Road' Countries' People Highly Rate Chinese Enterprises, Image of Chinese Enterprises Abroad Will Increasingly Improve", emphasized that a survey covering 12 "Belt and Road" countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America showed that China's economic development bringing positive impacts to other countries and even when global economic development has become a broad consensus. Nearly 70% of respondents from countries along the "Belt and Road" affirmed the importance of developing bilateral relations with China, thereby validating the widespread appeal of "Belt and Road" economic cooperation.

Second, the reports significantly focus on economic cooperation between China and ASEAN, establishing it as a successful model of economic integration under the BRI framework. A report on September 10, 2021, titled "China-ASEAN Expo Never Ends", emphasized that through this "never-ending" platform of the BRI, an increasing number of ASEAN specialty products, such as Vietnamese coffee, Malaysian durian, Thai rubber pillows, and Myanmar jade, can smoothly enter the Chinese market. The report also directly quoted former Director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, renowned economist Vo Dai Luoc, who believed that promoting comprehensive cooperation

with China would inject strong momentum into the economic recovery of ASEAN countries. This reporting method, which combines specific trade achievements with positive evaluations from local authoritative experts, can effectively enhance the credibility of the reports. CRI not only emphasizes the continuous growth of bilateral trade volume and the deep integration of industrial chains but also actively showcases the strong resilience of the Chinese economy itself and its supportive role in regional cooperation. For example, a report on November 9, 2021, titled “China’s Total Exports Maintain Double-Digit Growth Rate, Chinese Foreign Ministry: Chinese Economy Full of Resilience and Vitality”, pointed out that despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the first 10 months of 2021, China’s total import and export volume with major trading partners such as ASEAN, the EU, the US, and Japan all grew significantly, and its import and export volume with countries along the “Belt and Road” also grew robustly. A report on May 23, 2022, titled “39.1 Trillion RMB and 800 Billion USD: China’s Foreign Trade Grows in Both Quality and Quantity”, further presented this viewpoint with specific data.

However, when faced with skepticism or even stigmatization of the BRI from the Western world, particularly the US, and especially when addressing certain arguments that might affect China-Vietnam cooperation, CRI online Vietnamese version also adopted a firm response and targeted “warnings”. The most representative example is a report from April 20, 2021, titled “Stay Alert to US Using Trade Deficit to Undermine China-Vietnam Relations”, which directly pointed out the attempt by Western media to use Vietnam’s trade deficit with China to sow discord in China-Vietnam relations. By deeply analyzing the complementary structure of China-Vietnam trade—namely, Vietnam importing means of production from China, processing them, and then re-exporting to European and American markets to earn a trade surplus—the report forcefully refuted the fallacy that “Vietnam loses out in China-Vietnam trade.” Similarly, when facing the broader “debt trap theory”, a commentary on October 16, 2023, titled “Commentary: ‘Belt and Road’ is a ‘Development Pie,’ Not a ‘Debt Trap’”, not only listed the actual debt composition of countries like Sri Lanka, refuting the distorted reports of Western media, but also specifically cited the views of leaders and relevant scholars from multiple countries to prove that the “Belt and Road” brings development opportunities, not debt crises, and emphasized that no country has fallen into a debt crisis due to its participation in the BRI. This method of refutation through cross-verification from multiple sources can, to the greatest extent, dispel the impact of negative narratives from the Western world.

In summary, CRI online Vietnamese version’s reports related to the Belt and Road Initiative in the economic field have the core goal of shaping and disseminating a positive image based on “mutual benefit, win-win results, and common development.” By showcasing the positive global impact of the Belt and Road, focusing on the fruitful achievements of economic cooperation between “China-ASEAN” and between China and Vietnam, and actively incorporating positive feedback from Vietnam, the reports strive to construct a cooperation narrative full of opportunities and vitality. At the same time, when faced with external skepticism and negative publicity, the reports adopt a direct and forceful refutation stance, thereby safeguarding the reputation of the initiative and the good atmosphere of China-Vietnam cooperation. This narrative strategy not only serves to enhance the awareness and acceptance of

the Belt and Road Initiative in Vietnam but also reflects China's increasingly mature and confident international communication capabilities.

Transportation and infrastructure construction: global connectivity and regional development

In the concrete practice of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), transportation and infrastructure construction have consistently been its most solid pillars and pioneering forces driving regional coordinated development. First, from a macro perspective, the BRI, with its forward-looking planning and large-scale investment, has significantly enhanced the level and efficiency of "hard connectivity" globally. It has laid an important material foundation for the facilitation of international trade, the cross-regional free flow of production factors, and the acceleration of regional economic integration. Numerous reports in CRI online Vietnamese version point to the construction and upgrading of key infrastructure projects such as railways, ports, and road networks. These have effectively shortened geographical distances, significantly reduced logistics costs between countries, and opened new sea access routes for some traditionally landlocked nations. This, in turn, has forcefully promoted the optimization and reshaping of cross-border industrial and supply chains, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the stability and growth of the global economy. As clearly stated in a report on March 25, 2023, titled "Writing a New Chapter of Peaceful Development: Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of President Xi Jinping's Proposal to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", through the China-Laos Railway, tropical fruits from Southeast Asia can reach China in just 26 h. Thanks to the BRI, East Africa now has its first expressway, and the Maldives has its first sea-crossing bridge. Furthermore, the uninterrupted operation of China-Europe freight trains effectively promotes trade between China and Europe, building a new bridge connecting the world. The reports vividly demonstrate the breakthrough achievements brought about by BRI infrastructure construction and its important contributions to the economic development and livelihood improvement of countries along the routes.

Second, at the level of focusing on regional and bilateral cooperation, CRI online Vietnamese version's reports particularly highlight the intensive cultivation and fruitful achievements of BRI infrastructure construction in Southeast Asia. Among these, the cases of Laos, Indonesia, and Vietnam are most representative. For Laos, the completion and operation of the China-Laos Railway is regarded as a historic project that has thoroughly transformed the country. A report on December 3, 2021, titled "The Secret to Helping Laos Transform from a 'Landlocked Country' to a 'Land-linked Country'", profoundly revealed how this railway helps Laos transition from a geographically "landlocked country" to a geo-economically "land-linked country." The report also cited a World Bank report predicting that the China-Laos Railway will bring Laos a 21% long-term increase in total income. And a report on December 21, 2020, titled "Laos' First Expressway Officially Opens to Traffic", emphasized the historic significance of the Vientiane-Vang Vieng expressway project by quoting the Lao Minister of Public Works and Transport, who stated that the project would make an important contribution to Laos' socio-economic

development. To the extend of Indonesia, the construction of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway marks Southeast Asia's entry into the high-speed rail era. A report on August 22, 2022, titled "Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway Trains Begin Transportation from Qingdao, China", recorded the historic moment of China's high-speed trains being exported to Indonesia as a completed system for the first time, emphasizing that the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway is the first overseas project where Chinese high-speed rail is implemented with a systematic, all-element, and all-industry-chain approach. It can significantly reduce travel time between Jakarta and Bandung from over 3 h to just 40 min. A report on October 18, 2023, titled "Official Opening and Operation of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway Cooperatively Built by China and Indonesia", announced the official commencement of operations for this first high-speed railway in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, Vietnam highlights cooperation in urban rail transit. A report on October 16, 2023, titled "Vietnamese Scholar: 'Belt and Road' Initiative Continues to be a Catalyst for Regional Cooperation and Development", specifically mentioned the positive social effects of Hanoi's Cat Linh-Ha Dong urban light rail. This light rail has become a popular "check-in" spot for many young people, bringing great convenience to citizens' travel and prompting the "kingdom of motorcycles" to enter a new era of green transportation. Furthermore, the report cited Dr. Nguyen Duc Thanh, Dean of the Institute for Economics and Policy Research at Vietnam National University, Hanoi, who believes that China's BRI is directly related to improving interconnectivity and infrastructure development among ASEAN and Asia-Pacific countries. If steadily advanced, it will make a positive contribution to promoting regional trade and investment liberalization.

Evidently, CRI online Vietnamese version's reporting in the field of transportation and infrastructure aims to construct a positive narrative of the BRI centered on interconnectivity, common development, and livelihood improvement. Through macro-level depictions of its global impact and in-depth focus on landmark projects such as the China-Laos Railway, the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, and Hanoi's urban light rail, the reports not only showcase China's strong capabilities and rich experience in infrastructure construction but also highlight the tangible benefits and development opportunities these projects bring to countries and regions along the routes. This communication strategy aims to strengthen the recognition and willingness to participate in the BRI among Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries, thereby creating a positive and favorable public opinion environment for promoting higher-quality and more sustainable BRI cooperation.

Cooperation in other fields: diverse picture of security and mutual trust, livelihood improvement, and civilizational mutual learning

In the military security domain, although the number of reports in CRI online Vietnamese version is not large, it emphasizes the importance of military mutual trust between nations for the smooth advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For example, high-level military officials from China and Myanmar expressed hopes to strengthen cooperation, jointly maintain peace and stability along the border, and create favorable conditions for economic development, with

Myanmar stating its support for jointly building the BRI and the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. Reports on projects such as China's aid in constructing the new headquarters building for Cambodia's Ministry of National Defense also reflect the intention to enhance friendly relations and serve regional stability through non-direct military cooperation.

Second, in the fields of society, healthcare, and environmental protection, related reports increasingly highlight the inclusive and sustainable development characteristics of the BRI. For instance, China's commitment to prioritize African countries for COVID-19 vaccine provision and the early commencement of construction for the Africa CDC headquarters demonstrate a spirit of mutual assistance in times of adversity. The completion of Bangladesh's first large-scale modern wastewater treatment plant and the successful operation of the Can Tho waste-to-energy plant in Vietnam vividly interpret how BRI projects can directly improve local ecological environments and people's livelihoods, receiving high praise from local governments and arousing.

Third, in the domain of culture and people-to-people exchanges, the report content is also very rich. For example, the Silk Road International Film Festival and Art Festival have become important platforms for showcasing the diverse cultures of countries along the routes and promoting artistic exchange. The Silk Road Television International Cooperation Community continues to grow, and a news program titled "China-Vietnam Connect" jointly launched by the national media of Vietnam and China, is another example. These initiatives are all dedicated to building bridges for information sharing and emotional communication, thereby consolidating the popular support for BRI construction.

Furthermore, in education cooperation, reports focus on the valuable learning and development opportunities the BRI provides for youth in participating countries. Specific content includes the Chinese government providing a large number of scholarships to countries like Vietnam to assist in talent cultivation. Vocational education projects like "Luban Workshops" have seen successful implementation in Africa, directly serving local industrialization processes and youth employment. The report on January 24, 2024, about Xi Jinping attending the reply letter ceremony for Kenyan students also reflects the importance attached to youth exchange and the inheritance of friendship.

Finally, in technology-related reports, the core focus on is how technological innovation and cooperation are becoming new engines for the high-quality development of the BRI. For instance, the China Hi-Tech Fair features a special "Belt and Road" pavilion, showcasing cooperation potential in emerging industries. China has proposed the "International Science and Technology Cooperation Initiative", deeply implemented the "Belt and Road" Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, signed science and technology cooperation agreements with over 80 participating countries, and jointly established joint laboratories. Particularly in space technology, a report on July 19, 2023, detailed China's adoption of the "Space Silk Road", engaging in extensive cooperation with partner countries in areas such as satellite development and Beidou system applications, sharing the achievements of technological development.

Overall, CRI online Vietnamese version, through its reporting on cooperation in the aforementioned various fields, strives to present the comprehensiveness and far-reaching impact of the BRI. These reports not only emphasize China's active role in promoting global governance and building a community with a shared future for mankind but also vividly demonstrate how the BRI, through multi-dimensional and multi-layered practical cooperation, brings development opportunities to countries along the routes, improves people's livelihoods, and promotes civilizational mutual learning, thereby shaping the BRI into an open, inclusive, mutually beneficial, win-win, and world-benefiting international cooperation framework.

Micro-level: reporting presentation features

CRI Vietnamese version, as a key channel for China's communication of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to Vietnam, exhibits certain strategic characteristics in its information delivery, tone control, and language use. An in-depth analysis of these features is crucial for understanding the communication effects of CRI online Vietnamese version in Vietnam and exploring future optimization paths.

First, in terms of reporting methods and sentiment strategies, CRI Vietnamese version generally adopts direct and clear information presentation, with distinct themes, striving to enable the Vietnamese audience to quickly grasp the core content and progress of the BRI. At the same time, reports exhibit a significant positive sentiment, dedicated to shaping a positive and beneficial image of the BRI. Positive terms like "fruitful achievements" and "mutual benefit and win-win" appear frequently, aiming to guide the audience towards a positive perception. However, although reports mention various information sources, including official voices and expert opinions from China and partner countries, direct and vivid narratives from ordinary people are relatively scarce. Even when report headlines, such as the one on November 4, 2020, concerning a survey report on the image of Chinese enterprises, mentioned "high praise from people in countries along the route", it often remains a macro-level relay of survey results, lacking a direct presentation and narration of individual experiences. This reporting method, while ensuring authority, may, due to the lack of diverse perspectives and relatable expressions, lead to the construction of a positive image of the BRI appearing somewhat deliberate in the sight of some Vietnamese audiences, even carrying a certain propaganda flavor, thereby potentially weakening its natural affinity and persuasiveness.

Second, regarding language use strategies, CRI online Vietnamese version's reports generally maintain a high level of linguistic normalization and grammatical accuracy. However, the frequent appearance of phrases like "our station's reporter" ("Đài chúng tôi") and "our station's commentary" ("Bình luận của đài chúng tôi"), while conventional for news writing, can, in a cross-cultural communication context, especially when explaining major international strategic initiatives, subtly reinforce the "self-other" distinction between the communicator (Chinese media) and the recipient (Vietnamese audience). This creates a one-way "telling" rather than an equal "dialogue" posture, potentially increasing the psychological distance with the audience and making the information perceived as an "external voice" rather than

a “story relevant to me.” Additionally, some reports still show minor flaws in editing details, such as inconsistent capitalization of certain words or lack of standard quotation marks. While these details may not cause severe misunderstandings, their persistence can negatively affect the Vietnamese audience’s reading experience and lead them to question the media’s professionalism.

Third, when addressing external negative viewpoints or skepticism towards the BRI, CRI online Vietnamese version’s reports often demonstrate a firm stance and sharp rhetoric. For example, when refuting the “debt trap theory” (report dated October 16, 2023), the “China overcapacity theory” (report dated June 11, 2024), or the US’s alleged “incitement” of China-African cooperation (report dated November 24, 2021), reports use highly critical terms such as “absurdly ridiculous”, “ulterior motives”, “twisting black and white” and “hegemonic logic”. This clear stance unequivocally conveys China’s solemn position and determination to protect its core interests and the initiative’s reputation. However, when directly naming and criticizing certain countries, led by the US, this style of harsh, even somewhat emotional, critical language, when directed to Vietnam—a country with specific historical-cultural traditions and geopolitical sensitivities—may still present certain communication obstacles. Vietnam traditionally values “harmony” and tends towards euphemism and leaving room for maneuver in public expression. Overtly and directly expressing negative views, even if supported by objective facts, might make some Vietnamese audiences uncomfortable due to its “unsparing” manner of expression, potentially leading them to perceive China as “using the stage to criticize others” or “drawing Vietnam in to counter the US”. This potential risk of “disharmony”, if not handled properly, could be counterproductive to the communication’s original intent and negatively impact the construction of a popular foundation for the BRI in Vietnam.

Construction of precision communication optimization strategies for CRI Vietnamese version

Targeting the characteristics analyzed above, to further enhance the effectiveness of CRI online Vietnamese version’s precision communication of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to Vietnam, this paper proposes the following optimization strategies.

First, enhance the relevance of reporting by incorporating non-official sources, thereby improving the affinity and persuasiveness of news coverage in a subtle yet steady manner. At the operational level, journalists should be encouraged to deeply with local communities in Vietnam and focus their attention on ordinary Vietnamese citizens. By doing so, they can uncover the positive changes that the BRI has brought to people’s daily lives, such as increased incomes, improved travel convenience, and enhanced overall accessibility. Then, there should be a shift in news narrative strategies—moving away from excessive grand narratives and placing greater emphasis on telling authentic “small yet beautiful” stories, and use touching details and sincere emotions to move the audience, making the grand initiative tangible and perceptible. At the same time, In terms of source selection, in addition to institutional authorities and mainstream experts, it is advisable to appropriately

incorporate independent research institutes, industry associations, or opinion leaders with social credibility in Vietnam. By including their objective analysis and constructive commentary on the BRI, source diversity can be better balanced, thereby enhancing the objectivity of reporting.

Second, optimize the narrative voice, emphasizing “localized” expression, and adopt an equal dialogue posture to shorten the psychological distance with the Vietnamese audience. In reporting, attempts can be made to reduce highly subjective self-references like “our station’s reporter”, and instead use more objective and neutral narrative tones instead, such as directly presenting objective facts and data, or using more indirect attribution methods like “it is analyzed that” or “it is observed that”. More importantly, “localized” narration should be strengthened, meaning that the significance and value of the BRI should be expounded more from the perspective of Vietnam’s national development needs and the vital interests of its people. The initiative should be closely integrated with Vietnam’s own development plans like the “Two Corridors, One Economic Belt”, using cultural symbols and expressions that are more easily understood and accepted by the Vietnamese public. Concurrently, the meticulous management of editing and proofreading of report texts should be further strengthened to ensure that details such as orthography, punctuation, and the use of proper nouns comply with norms, thereby enhancing the media’s professional image. Consider engaging local Vietnamese personnel or Vietnamese students studying in China as assistant news editors to proofread and review textual expressions in news reports, thereby enhancing the accuracy of Vietnamese language usage in journalistic content.

Third, when responding to external skepticism and negative views, reporters should adopt language strategies that uphold principled positions while paying attention to communication artistry, in order to gain understanding and recognition in a more constructive and inclusive manner. When communicating to Vietnam, especially when clarifying or responding to negative remarks, greater emphasis can be placed on thorough reasoning and logical argumentation, speaking with facts and data, and reducing the use of emotional and highly aggressive vocabulary. Particularly when it might touch upon sensitive issues related to Vietnam’s delicate balance among major powers like China and the US, the critical edge can be directed more towards “certain false claims” and “certain erroneous cognitions”, rather than too frequently and directly targeting specific countries. At the same time, greater emphasis should be placed on how the BRI is committed to maintaining regional peace and stability, promoting common regional development, and how it helps Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, achieve long-term development interests, thereby seeking broader public support. Furthermore, greater use of “third-party narratives”. can be considered, such as citing objective evaluations and positive cases of the BRI from international sources (including those within Western countries), or by cooperating with Vietnamese media, think tanks, and other local institutions to interpret and respond to related issues through these platforms, thereby reducing the perception of direct confrontation and enhancing the flexibility of communication.

In conclusion, CRI online Vietnamese version has successfully constructed a narrative framework centered on positive cooperation in its BRI communication to

Vietnam. In future reporting, if continuous improvements can be made in enhancing the reliability of reports and diversifying perspectives, optimizing narrative voice and localized expression, and improving the strategic and artistic aspects of responding to controversies, it will be possible to more effectively enhance communication efficacy to Vietnam. This will contribute to deepening the “comradely and fraternal” good-neighborly and friendly relations between Vietnam and China, and foster a more favorable international public opinion environment for the high-quality development of the BRI in Vietnam and the wider region.

Conclusion

This study, taking the Vietnamese version of China Radio International (CRI) online as its object of investigation, has systematically analyzed its communication practices regarding the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from 2020 to 2024. The research found that CRI online Vietnamese version reports on the BRI actively constructed a positive image of the initiative as promoting global interconnectivity, driving regional economic development, improving people’s livelihoods, and deepening international cooperation. At the political and diplomatic levels, it emphasized high-level guidance and strategic alignment, highlighting the partnership between China, ASEAN, and Vietnam, while resolutely responding to external interference. In terms of economic development and infrastructure construction, cases such as the China-Laos Railway, the Indonesia-Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, and China-Vietnam transportation construction were used to demonstrate the concrete benefits brought by the initiative. Simultaneously, in fields like society, culture, education, and technology, reports also underscored the BRI’s positive contributions to promoting people-to-people bonds and sustainable development. However, in terms of communication methods and language use, this study also observed some shortcomings. Due to the concentrated presentation of positive information and the relative lack of diverse grassroots voices, the natural affinity of the reports among the Vietnamese audience might be affected to a certain extent. The “self-other” demarcation presents in the narrative voice, as well as the rather stern rhetoric when responding to controversies, could potentially trigger unfavorable communication effects in specific cultural contexts. Based on this, to enhance the effectiveness of China’s precision communication of the BRI to Vietnam, future efforts could focus on increasing the reliability and diversifying perspectives of report content, presenting more authentic stories of ordinary people. Narrative voice should be optimized, strengthening “localized” expression and building a more equal dialogue posture. When responding to external skepticism, it is advisable to uphold principles while paying attention to communication artistry, striving for understanding through more constructive and inclusive means. In future research, there is still vacancy for deepening studies related to the international communication of the BRI. Empirical research on the reception effects of international communication among Vietnamese audiences could be conducted to investigate their information preferences and cognitive patterns; a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of different communication channels in BRI communication to Vietnam could be undertaken; or, from

a cross-cultural communication perspective, a more systematic exploration of constructing a more universally applicable and appealing BRI discourse system could be pursued. These studies will provide valuable insights for China to enhance its international communication capabilities and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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Data availability The datasets analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Code availability The code used to create the conceptual diagram and analyse the data is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Ethical approval This research did not involve any human participants or animals. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required.

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