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A Study about the Communication Objectives of International Media Special Reference to CRI- Sinhala Service

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Abstract

This present study has been conducted to identify the soft diplomacy through the eastern media in post globalized era. CRI Sinhala service has been selected as the case for the present study in order to examine the main objectives of the eastern international media's soft diplomacy. This is a qualitative study and the CRI digital platforms such as the website and the FB page have been taken as the research samples. Over three months of period the website and the FB were examined in order to collect the data. The research findings indicated through the content analysis. As the result the current study indicated three main communication objectives which CRI Sinhala service needs to reach the international audience. Strengthen Sri Lanka – China relationship, Spread China's cultural values and built China's global image were indicated as three main communication objectives of the channel. Further each communication objective has taken out with several sub

themes. To strengthen the China- Sri Lanka relationships CRI has been reported about development projects and positive effects, import products from Sri Lanka to China, China's financial aids and support to Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka economy and politics from China's perspective and China-Sri Lanka diplomatic relationship could identify as the themes. Further to spread the China's cultural values it indicated Chinese language, Chinese food culture, aesthetics, beauty of China and customs and rituals. Further to indicate China's global power, innovations in science and technology, new development projects in China and other countries, China's foreign policies for the powerful countries in the world, China's view point and support about the different conflicts in world and China's political stability were indicated. There are few limitations in the research subject and sampling, in future that can be expanded.

Keywords: Soft Diplomacy, Communication Objectives, CRI, Communication Themes

Introduction

In 1941, *Life* magazine publisher Henry Luce invoked the prospect of an "American Century," urging his compatriots to assume the responsibilities of global leadership, a vision that soon coalesced as an extended era of Pax Americana. If Luce's admonition seemed prescient to some, it was perhaps a bit tardy by the standards of Hollywood. For in fact American mass media had already extended their transnational influence in the wake of World War I and would take similar advantage after World War II and the Cold War, culminating in almost a century of cultural hegemony (Rowe, G.; Frewer, L.J. 2005) [3].

Although ours is indeed an era of technological transformation, the broader context is framed by the denouement American cultural hegemony and most likely the end of an imperial era. The long history of empire be it Mayan, Chinese, Ottoman, or British has featured recurring waves of military conquest and economic exploitation complemented by the spatial extension of cultural influence in art, architecture, language, entertainment, and cuisine. The American Century was distinctive, however, because it was punctuated by three *world wars* that vanquished preexisting imperial powers and stimulated a series of technological innovations that helped to consolidate the transnational preeminence of American popular media.

Hence, the global power was shifting from country to country, the world latest power struggle goes with the United States of America and People's Republic of China. Thus, the power struggle happened due to the economic development of China. After late 1970's the communist system that Chinese has been adopted to develop the country used the main strengths of the country such as the population, was used to uplift the economy of the nation. Beginning in 1979, China launched several economic reforms. The central government-initiated price and ownership incentives for farmers, which enabled them to sell a portion of

their crops on the free market. In addition, the government established four special economic zones along the coast for the purpose of attracting foreign investment, boosting exports, and importing high technology products into China. Additional reforms, which followed in stages, sought to decentralize economic policymaking in several sectors, especially trade. Economic control of various enterprises was given to provincial and local governments, which were generally allowed to operate and compete on free market principles, rather than under the direction and guidance of state planning. In addition, citizens were encouraged to start their own businesses. Additional coastal regions and cities were designated as open cities and development zones, which allowed them to experiment with free-market reforms and to offer tax and trade incentives to attract foreign investment. From 1979 to 2018, China's annual real GDP averaged 9.5%. This has meant that on average China has been able to double the size of its economy in real terms every eight years. The global economic slowdown, which began in 2008, had a significant impact on the Chinese economy. China's media reported in early 2009 that 20 million migrant workers had returned home after losing their jobs because of the financial crisis and that real GDP growth in the fourth quarter of 2008 had fallen to 6.8% year-on-year. Thus, this vital development of China has taken the eye of the world all supremacies. Early 20th century, United States of America started to have the brand authority while the China had the manufacturing and the assembling power. With this vital development China became the second largest economy in the world and it became a treat to many other developed countries.

To understand the role played by the internet, we must first refer to Nye's concept of soft power, and particularly the role that non-coercive "attractive" power has in shaping the preferences of international actors. As Nye argues, the currency of soft power lies in culture, ideology/values, and policies.

Xijiang Pin has mentioned that we should increase China's soft power give a good Chinese narration and be better communication in China's message. Thus, China as a country uses different tactics in order to share the culture, ideology, politics and etc. to the international audience. Hence, the biggest method of China's soft diplomacy is Belt and Road Initiative concept. Then its education exchanges. Further, they are using Chinese international media such as CRI. China Radio international is the China's main international media which is spreading the Chinese news to the world. Thus, this research has been conducted in order to identify the role of CRI in the soft diplomacy of China. Therefore, the present study examined the China Radio International Sinhala service, to identify the communication objectives and the themes reported where the eastern media plays a vital role in the international relations.

Literature Review

China Radio International is frequently mentioned in research as part of China's bigger public diplomacy and soft power drive, which includes Confucius Institutes and the expansion of other major media channels like CCTV and Xinhua (Hooghe, 2005; Kurlantzick, 2007). Other studies look at CRI as a historical component of Chinese media policy. Overseas broadcasts began during the war of resistance against Japan in 1941, predating the Communist Party itself ("About China Radio International," 2012). It

was initially broadcast to English audiences in 1947, but it was originally just a mouthpiece for Chinese officials to broadcast information (C. C. Chen *et al.*, 2010; Kurlantzick, 2007). Since then, it has expanded to transmit in over 60 languages with over 100 international FM radio partners in Asia, Africa, North America, Europe, and Oceania (C. C. Chen *et al.*, 2010; Qing & Shiffman, 2015).

According to the research conducted by the Chen, Luo and Colapinto, the dramatic economic growth of China has meant a renewed international influence: It is widely recognized that China is, today, a central actor in the world economy and politics. Historically, economic power has always been accompanied by increasing international cultural influence and it's certain that China's economic stature will also be reflected in the diffusion of Chinese culture. This paper explores and discusses about the strategies of the Chinese government in strengthening its international influence and image – the so-called soft power – in the digital culture by examining the case of China Radio International (CRI), the only Chinese state-owned radio allowed to broadcast to overseas audience. China has moved away from pure propaganda toward a nuanced public relation strategy. One tool of this strategy is the international expansion of its media in different modes in the framework of the "going out" policy, aiming to make the Chinese language, Chinese culture and the Chinese media more visible internationally. This paper finds that the Chinese broadcaster, more than its Western counterparts such as BBC and the Voice of America, largely employs social site networks and new media, making interactivity its pivotal point of development. International partnerships and cooperation with foreign media are another successful approach of CRI in winning China's influence abroad.

According to the Straubhaar in 2010, he indicated that the China Radio International is adopting to the new technologies in order to spread the soft diplomacy of China towards the world. The author examines various aspects of China's broadcast media's current international communication practices, emphasizing the differences between China and other countries. Despite the fact that China's broadcast media outlets are state-owned and under the control of the Communist Party, they possess important economic characteristics and can make money in a free-market environment. Readers will be able to consider the causes and solutions to the problems, as well as future prospects, which will be the focus of the final section. The author skillfully establishes narratives on three levels, focusing on identifying difficulties at each level as well as their overall limits. Finally, the title of the final section serves as the research question, which is to determine effective methods of projecting China's voice. As part of his argument, the author cites various attempts that have been made and suggests improvements, which range from reforming broadcast communication technologies to changing the administration and operation modes of media organizations to diversifying media messages and setting public policy agendas, among other things. Strategies for developing meaningful communication are not solely focused on a single issue, and case-by-case evaluations are required to determine which strategies are most effective. In a nutshell, China is trying to improve its foreign communication practices in order to better show the Party's propaganda and spread the image of a peacefully rising China while also increasing China's global influence in a

rapidly changing world (Straubhaar, 2010).

Gaining as much as possible approval by international public opinion has been at the top of agenda of the Chinese government in its international expansion, especially in relation with Tibet and belt and initiative countries. In the new digitalized world, indeed, media target is a worldwide audience that is the reason why it is crucial for Chinese media to deliver their services in different languages. In its expansion on the international scale, the Chinese government has employed the ICT to promote its soft power and to construct its international image in an increasingly globalized world (Zhang, 2009; Zhao, 2008; Sun, 2010): The Internet has revolutionized the instrument of soft power for different reasons: Above all, despite the efforts of the Chinese government, the Internet is practically impossible to control. Whereas the traditional media provide only a one-way communication to the receiver of information, the Internet allows the user to select information to meet specific needs and provide immediate feedback. With the advent of the Internet, CRI established its own portal in December 1998. Two years later, CRI and other major Chinese state media outlets such as People's Daily, Xinhua, the official English-language newspaper China Daily and CCTV, were authorized by the Information Office of the State Council to serve as news providers via Internet. On January 24 2002, under the promotion of the Central Department of Propaganda, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese broadcasting regulator State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), CRI integrated three Chinese websites (China news, Global Chinese Net and TV.com) giving birth to CRI Online (guoji zaixian).

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the philosophical and epistemological underpinning of the knowledge and subject arena covers by the study. The present study seeks to identify the major communication objectives of CRI and the soft diplomacy of China. Hence, it indicated the major themes reported through the channel for their communication objectives.

Therefore, the researcher used qualitative research method in order to address the research question. With the expansion of new media and digital media platforms in the world the digital media content became very prioritize platform to collect the data to create very thoughtful and in-depth discussion for the research. Therefore, as the present study conducts depth research on CRI- Sinhala service the study uses the main digital platforms such as CRI website and CRI Facebook page in order to get the appropriate data. The CRI website includes the web radio and the e-publication of the magazine. The data were collected over three months of period.

Data Analysis

CRI- Sinhala service has several prominent effects to its international audience. Each and every media channel has its own objectives and the international media channels have different and specific objectives reach which different from local channels. Therefore, in the present study author has been indicated the reasons to attract the Sri Lankan audience by examine CRI digital media platforms such as CRI website and CRI Facebook page. The related themes, specialties, features indicated through content analysis has

given as indications logically the reason of CRI – Sinhala service to attract Sri Lankan audience to its content. Therefore, the content analysis indicated main three reason which CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract its international audience.

▪ Strengthen the Sri Lanka – China Relationship

According to the content analysis conducted, the one of a main reason which CRI- Sinhala service wanted to attract Sri Lankan audience is to strengthen the Sri Lanka- China relationship. Sri Lanka's biggest investor at the moment is China. Even though Sri Lanka is a small country, it's very iconic. Therefore, the reporting of CRI- Sinhala service has a main objective to attract the Sri Lankan audience to tie up the relationship of two countries. Because western media channels create a different perception about China among the Sri Lankans. But with the recent bonds made between two countries, it's very important to have positive relationship between Sri Lanka and China. Therefore, CRI – reporting, functions and the characteristics of digital platforms have been used to indicate its main objectives of reporting towards international audience. Of CRI- Sinhala website. In the characteristics of the website the prominence of news has been given to the news related to Sri Lanka. The special news inside Sri Lanka has been reported in China's perspective to Sri Lankans. Therefore, daily more than 6 main news items are reporting about Sri Lanka. Further these news items were reporting about the Sri Lankan economy, political condition, Sri Lanka's international relationship with different countries. Website video, which it mentioned as an icon in the site has brought out the important information of Sri Lanka. Especially the political decisions and political condition of Sri Lanka is reporting in this section. The specialty is that all these news brought up with the China's perspective about Sri Lanka.

In the final characteristic of quires (Sub heading) of the website totally indicating the China's support for the development of Sri Lanka. The news specially indicating that the future of Sri Lanka- China relationship is positive, The China's support to build up the lotus villa, Sri Lanka's economy is developing with the support of China, China supports on the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Therefore, it's clear that the news indicating about the China- Sri Lanka relationship towards the audience. Further, the news can be categorized for main themes. It's about China's support on Sri Lankan export industry, China's support on Sri Lankan import industry, China's financial aids for Sri Lanka, Chinese development projects in Sri Lanka and its benefits for Sri Lankans, China's support to Sri Lankan rural people development and Sri Lanka – China new policies and decision which made for the development of two countries. Therefore, it's clear that CRI wants to attract the audience in order to strengthen the relationship between Sri Lanka and China. Because the general audience want to know the strength of this relationship.

In CRI- Sinhala service Facebook page "Cheena Sinhala-Handa" in video section, it mainly reports the China and Sri Lanka relations news. Such as Sri Lankan import products in China. In this they give the videos of Sri Lankan products in China such as Ceylon tea, Ceylon biscuits, Ceylon coconut products etc. These video information gives much thoughtful insights that the CRI- Sinhala service want to attract the Sri Lankan audience in order to strengthen the relationship of both countries.

▪ Spread Chinese Cultural Values

With the data collected through the digital media platforms that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the international audience towards Chinese culture. As China is one of the super powers in the world, it's very important for China to spread their culture to the world. Especially to a country as Sri Lanka because China has its main investment projects. Moreover, it's important to know about the Chinese culture and the China's internal images by the Sri Lankan general audience as they don't have any other platform to get the understanding of China. Furthermore, as CRI is an international media, conveying its internal functions and facts such as culture is one of the key objectives.

There is a special column which indicated in the CRI – website as Chinese Aesthetics. This column includes China's all the 26 provinces. Therefore, the readers can go and read the specialties of China's each province. In this, CRI- Sinhala service reports the provincial environment, weather, special cultures and customs, aesthetics and decorations, food items and etc. The readers will get a very clear understanding about provinces and China's internal situation through the CRI Website in the sub heading of Chinese Aesthetics.

This gives the clear insights of China to the audience. It indicated the uniqueness of Chinese provinces. In any other media or western based digital media platforms won't have this opportunity to get the insights about China. But CRI-Sinhala service give much clear insights about China to indicate the China's rich culture. Therefore, iconic reporting has been influenced in order to spread Chinese cultural values.

Chinese Language column in CRI- Sinhala service is also very important. The website content of the CRI-Sinhala service has been given a priority for the Chinese language. There is a separate column offered for Chinese language on the website. The Chinese language was taught through different current and important scenes. The most important day-to-day activities in both countries, as well as the day-to-day-needed dialogues, were explained in the Chinese language column of CRI. Therefore, it was indicated one Chinese word for one day. Every day, one Chinese word was taught along with a dialogue or sentence which it can be used. The words which were being taught and introduced on the CRI website were basically which were important for both countries. The common words that were used and important to learn were introduced on the website. For the audience who follows the website daily, they can learn and have a good knowledge of the language. It indicates the tones of the Chinese word and the sentence where the word can be used. Therefore, the words were chosen with timely importance. Thus, the words mentioned to introduce myself, understand some important food items, different traditional and cultural activities, greetings, local medicines, important local economic places and etc., are explained in the column of language. Furthermore, the language was explained with audio format and catchy images related to the meaning of the sentence. It's used to drag the viewer's eye. Therefore, this indicating that CRI Sinhala service need to attract the audience to spread their cultural values.

According to the indications of CRI- website analysis China's history and the cultural value has been given to the international audience in different manner. The website has a different section which includes Chinese proverbs. This section will indicate the China's history and its power.

Further in Asia the Chinese culture is one of very authentic culture which take prominence in world. This explains historical thinking, Chinese belief, mythical ideologies, etc. It indicates the Chinese words, which is important in the story. The audio and the images are used to explain the proverb stories. The audio recording has been done with the Sri Lankan and Chinese presenters. The specialty is that Chinese presenters can speak good Sinhala, where the explanations are very clear and interesting for the listeners. CRI- Sinhala service brought its soft diplomacy in a broad manner to the audience. As Chinese culture is very much important and unique CRI- Sinhala service has given the priority.

Further in the CRI magazine there are separate pages for Chinese food, Chinese language and Chinese Aesthetics. Each platform of CRI Sinhala service is giving different information in same main theme. The themes reporting can be indicate as same but the content include inside has difference and variety which covers important contexts of China.

Therefore, with the research indications that its clear China needs to Share their soft culture to the world. CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the Sri Lankan audience to educate about the China's culture and internal facts. Because the other country media won't ever be a good platform to give the China's insides. Further the most powerful countries in the world always need to give the vision and the perception of the country ideology to the world as western media does. China is one of the powerful countries in the world and with the belt and imitative project it became more and more powerful country which took the eye of many other countries in the world. As per the study concludes that CRI needs to attract the audience to learn the Chinese culture. It justifies with the main facts indicated such as Chinese language, Chinese aesthetics, Chinese food culture, China's beauty and etc. Therefore, the CRI- Sinhala service one of a main objective is to educate about the cultural values of China to the international audience.

▪ Indicate the China's Global Power to the Sri Lankan Audience

The third reason indicated through the content analysis that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the audience to indicate the China's global power as a country in the continent. To indicate this reason CRI has used different sub themes in the digital media platforms. In international media it's a main objective to indicate their global power to the world. This could identify as one of their key missions as well. As China became very much powerful country during the recent decades of time it's important to indicate the China's power through its main international media, CRI. Further with the strong and close relationship of China to Sri Lanka, CRI-Sinhala service needs to attract the audience to visit it often in order to explain China's main objectives and goals as a state.

CRI- Sinhala service first page, it always reports the China's global relations. In this they reported mainly the foreign delegates meetings between China and different countries, Further the new policies and decisions made by China and different countries also reported in order to give the powerfulness of China to the local audience. Moreover, the new decisions made by CPC is also indicated. According to the observation per day at least one news item related to these facts are reported in CRI- Sinhala service. Further the

China's economic stability has been reported in this section. The different export exhibitions which China organizes has been indicated through this section. Therefore, it's clear with the reporting analysis indication 1 that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the international audience to indicate their global power as a country.

According to the indications of the content analysis the designate that surface of CRI- website, it's indicating the scientific and technological innovations of China. This section is designating the development of China as a country in the world. Further this section explains the innovations in space sciences mainly because the new findings of the space will always indicate the technological power of a country. Therefore, this section prioritizes the space sciences and technology development in China. Not only that, but also it explains the innovations in e-commerce industry and etc. Moreover, this section justify that the Chinese technology is very much powerful. Further it gives the insights of global relations. Here CRI indicates the facts that China's viewpoint about the global conflicts and how the China's policies and the support to the different conflicts and issues in the world. This section indicates the power of China to the international audience. Therefore, this could identify as one of the main reasons which CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the audience.

According to the International Focus subtheme has mentioned the China's exhibitions which is organized for the world to see in different themes such as innovations, export imports, science and technology etc. This will indicate the audience that China has made the platform to the world and it designated the country's power to the audience. Further this section indicates the China's history and how the power of China does start from the historical time. The present development of China is also indicating in this section. Further, the innovations of other countries have indicated through the China's view point in this section. Therefore, it's clear that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the audience in order to indicate about China's global power to the international audience.

Further website has given the priority to explain the China's political stability as a country and the strength of Communist party of China. This indicate that the political power of China can lead the world. The history of CPC, latest decisions of CPC, latest policies invented by CPC and the strength of Chinese president and the support of him to the development of China have been explained through this section. Each and every sub section of reporting is indicating the power of China. Therefore, it's clear that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the audience to indicate the China's global power.

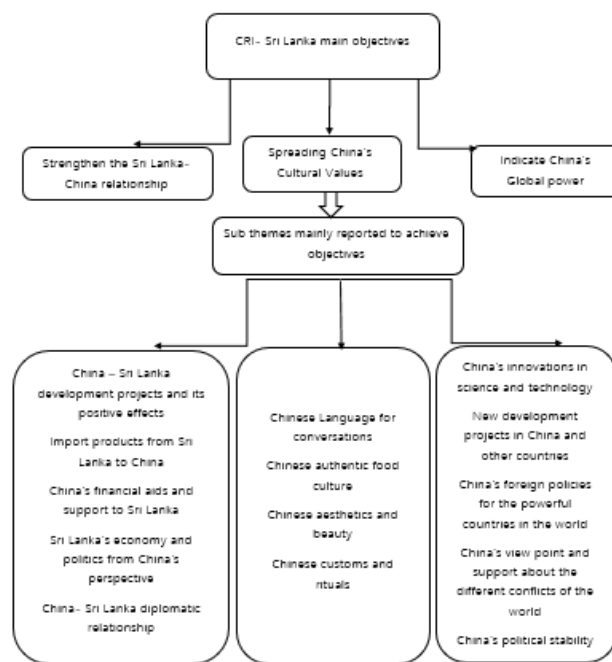
According to the figure 29 CRI- Sinhala Facebook page often report innovations of China and the China's political stability. Therefore, the followers could easily indicate the power of China as a country. The technological innovations are indicated much and highly reported with the images and short descriptions which it could grab the audience easily. Further the China's political stability brought out in different posts as well. This explains much about the life style of China's president, history of the China's President and his contributions to China.

With the data and the analysis of the content of digital media platform it's clear that CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the Sri Lankan audience in order to indicate the China's global power and strength as a state in Asia. Therefore, it

indicates the technological development, innovations, political stability and economic development as mainly. With this reporting analysis the study justify that CRI Sri Lanka needs to indicate the China's global power in the world.

Discussion and Conclusions

With the data analysis three main factors have been identified as the reasons why the CRI- Sinhala service needs to attract the Sri Lankan audience. As CRI – Sinhala service is one of the main international media, the international media has its objectives and missions to achieve with the media channels. Not as a national media channel the objectives of the international media channel are different. Because in many national media channels have the objective of earning money, getting revenue, update the latest information of the country etc. But the objectives of international channel are unique. Generally, the international media is starting in order to give the insights of the powerful country to other countries in the world. Therefore, when the China gained the power in the world, the Chinese state media has been expanded to the entire world in order to give the China's insights clearly. With the Belt and Initiative project the China became more powerful and it needed the positive relationship with all the countries in world. Mainly the countries which are in the project circle. Therefore, as Sri Lanka has been taken the prominence of the maritime silk road of China, the insights of China sharing to Sri Lanka accurately became very important task. Therefore, the CRI - Sinhala service needed to attract the Sri Lankan audience for the objectives of the state media which it could indicate with the reporting of CRI- Sinhala service. The research findings indicated that China is using its main international media in order to share the soft diplomacy through the channel. Therefore, the Chinese language, culture, food items, the science and development, innovations and etc. has been indicated through the channel to the audience. The below figure will explain the research main findings. There are few limitations in the research with the sample, research subject and time frame. In future this can be expanded and various research facts can be indicated.



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