

《中国文化成为外国汽车制造商揽客良方》

Mandarin has become a new vehicle for foreign automakers to woo Chinese customers.

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It sometimes even sings — such as when Nicholas Speeks, a Briton who heads sales and marketing for Mercedes-Benz in China, drew cheers on last Monday by serenading a crowd at Auto China in Beijing with the ballad Great China.

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"We have the same home, and its name is China," Speeks crooned in Mandarin to applause at the company's booth at the show.

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That was a day after the brand's new E-class car was unveiled to the tune of the Chinese classic song In the Field of Hope. Participants joked that the country truly is "a field of hope" for Mercedes-Benz.

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China became the automaker's largest market when it sold 373,500 vehicles on the mainland last year. Sixty-seven percent of its vehicles were manufactured in China, 12 percentage points more than in 2014.

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Jaguar Land Rover CEO Ralf Speth ended his speech at the auto show by declaring in Mandarin, "I love China." His speech centered on the company opening an aluminum workshop in Jiangsu province earlier this year, its first such plant outside the United Kingdom. Speth also referred to a saying used in both Chinese and Western cultures: "Teaching one how to fish is better than giving fish to him."

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"Showgirls have not been allowed at the auto show for the past two years. So car companies are trying something new to attract attention," said John Zeng, managing director of Shanghai-based consultancy LMC Automotive.

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"Many carmakers have localized, and such behavior is part of localization," said an auto analyst.

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