Understanding Political Debates from the Perspective of Appraisal Theory of China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This paper examines political speeches of President Xi's Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road using corpus based critical discourse analysis. The corpus of the study comprises political debates of President Xi on the Belt and Road Initiative. The study employs appraisal theory and corpus based CDA to reveal the perception of China's mega project. The study reveals that the use of attitude and graduation resources, where the former seems mostly positive and the latter are abundant in force with enough focus. The study also highlights the significance of Belt and Road Initiative. Finally, it is highlighted that the Belt and Road Initiative will have a significant impact on the development of future international community. However, the Initiative faces many obstacles, including a lack of central cooperation, political regime and belief conflicts, and international feasibility issues.

Introduction

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, first called One Belt One Road (OBOR) and later renamed Belt and Road Initiative. (BRI). Since then, it has become Xi's signature foreign policy project. However, the recent decade has witnessed the contingent amendment and rationalization of the "Belt and Road Initiative" experiencing steady and fast progress, Afzaal, 2021; 2022). China, presented with arduous tasks of both tackling supplementary economic anti-globalization of those developed stakeholders and liberalizing foreign and even multinational trade, is no exception, either. However, under the heavy pressure of western cultural monopoly and political discourse hegemony, the communities involved become evidently more inclined to learn about China from a few scattered words or fake information from the Western media rather than the first-hand Chinese material, resulting in construction and presentation of biased, incomplete, distorted or totally reversed knowledge or impression of China, (Afzaal 2023; 2019; Afzaal et al, 2022).

The study focuses on the discourses of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with four main themes. First, China's Belt & Road Initiative is crucial to its economic growth by exploring new kinds of international economic cooperation with new

partners, image of China's growing economy, China's global or shared community, and perception of the BRI.

Words and deeds of national leaders in grand events not only represent their own claims, but also transmit the attitude and position of the whole country, and to some degree reflects the image of the country. Multiple versions may be provided to deepen the international community to acquaint itself with China more directly, timely and realistically so that President Xi Jinping's authentic stance would be prominently manifested, incorrect deviation and non-objective appraisal resources caused by translation could be effectively avoided, and the application and allocation of many appraisal resources might be truthfully presented. It is therefore particularly urgent to enhance China's voice, prestige, and comprehensive competency in alien arenas. International forums and conferences often serve as accessible channels for countries to exhibit national competitiveness and sustain good relations with friends or opponents, corroborating the necessity to practise common development and exerting efficient power on the national image dissemination.

Furthermore, China International Import Expo (hereafter CIIE) is genuinely the world-class event (though each year a significant speech delivered before opening of the fair) announced by President Xi at the "Belt and Road" Forum for International Cooperation, so the typical large-scale exposition signifies Xi's (exactly China's) initial vital and useful document in May, 2017 for partnership among pertinent nations and regions.

The study focuses on the application of the appraisal theory (AT). AT is the development and improvement of interpersonal meaning in systemic functional linguistics, focusing mainly on various discourse-oriented components like attitudes that are able to be negotiated in discourse, and further attaining a sound linguistic system expressing interpersonal meaning from the level of discourse semantics (Martin & Rose, 2003). Renowned experts represented by Martin (2000), have already started to study appraisal system to explore the meaning of texts and utterances, and the process has lasted for many years. Martin and White (2005) have published the first monograph of further standardized AT later, which is also regarded as the milestone theory.

Previously many studies have been conducted to analyse the political debastes using theoretical insights of critical discourse analysis(Wu & Cheng, 2023; Afzaal et al., 2022; Taylor 2022; and Wu, 2023). In addition, other studies, for instance, White (1998) uses AT to conduct a systematic study of news discourse, focusing on how readers have made sense of social evaluations news reports conveyed to the public. Although the theory is employed at both home and abroad, analyzed texts and discourse of distinct topics, genres, and themes turn out relatively rare, coming later (including textbook, literary, news, speech, advertising discourse; film and television lines, broadening the micro range) in the traditional Chinese settings. Some scholars in recent years tend to survey and advance China's national image from the perspective of AT, paying more attention to the soft power construction hidden behind news or speech discourse.

In China, the theoretical research of AT can be dated back to work of Zhang (1998) with his *Discussing Domain and Incarnation of Discourse Tone*. Nevertheless, numerous scholars have really been fascinated just after Wang's (2001) introduction of the background and framework of appraisal system in detail. Li (2004) shows interest in reviewing the application of discourse analysis (DA) theory, adumbrating that the

interpersonal attitudes and the important role of context in the process of identifying appraisal meaning should be further recognized. In terms of traditional approaches, celebrities in the academia center on sociocultural contexts, especially DA, which studies topics in a wide stretch of fields (Huang & Zhang, 2020; Zhang, 2018) such as politics, economy, culture and society. Pang (2013) utilizes an analytical corpus-based approach to compare the speeches addressed by former U.S. President George W. Bush ahead of and following the Iraq War and argues how the American government usually reconstructs the legitimacy of the Iraq War. Zhao, Guo and Che (2016) dig deep into three mainstream media in the UK, namely the New Statesman, the Daily Telegraph and the Economist, and wield a large number of words that fall under the category of affect resources indicating support for the "Belt and Road", rendering readers emotionally charged; the belief that joining the initiative will do more good than harm in boosting the UK economy is confirmed to a large extent. Dong (2019) chooses several pieces of news reports from the mainstream Italian about China's opening ceremony of the 19th National Congress as research materials to examine the natural attitudes of Italian media toward the event in China predicated on the attitude system where lexical words normally hint and carry resources of positive judgement and appreciation.

Application of AT in Chinese DA is comparatively insufficient. Liu (2008) elaborates straight on the attitude resources in news comments, asserting the presentation of hidden ideology, another fashion to manipulate and locate readers. AT is faithfully probed into speaking of discursive construction in the national image, which effectively makes up the deficiency in that it effectively points out the feasible and practical media strategies for major powers' relations (Pan & Dong, 2017).

Valuable enlightenment furnished, political speeches are somehow analytical or rallying reports delivered by national leaders on the current situation of the country in a certain manner, which fully clarifies the nation's stance and viewpoints towards relevant issues. Besides, Yang (2013) excavates the double angles of the attitude resources in political speeches, often opposite regardless of neutrality: positive or negative; and explicit or implicit.

Three interrelated subsystems within AT can thus be introduced by Martin and Rose (2003) into Xi's organized speech at the opening ceremony of the forum, being fairly representative among a great deal of political discourse; and the actual application of these appraisal resources in Chinese discourse resonating with the audience as well as winning people's recognition is of profound significance, revealing the approaches to realizing interpersonal meaning in authentic political discourse. Because appraisal resources in such discourse can serve to inquire into the apparent relationship between language and power, receivers can usually directly or obliquely obtain some of the orator's attitudes and positions from the news reports. It is therefore viable to analyze the major political text in China from the perspective of AT, and capture and visualize the distribution characteristics and reasons of the difference(s) in international business communication.

Appraisal Theory

Evaluation of language was generalized as an appraisal system. Predicated on Martin's AT (2005), the article discusses the distributive features and distinctions of appraisal resources in Xi's speech and clarifies what implied meanings like national

image is constructed behind political discourse. Tailored to the research objectives proposed, appraisal theory refers to three-dimensional framework (setting criteria with several subcategories) for Chinese-context appraisal resources.

The attitude system can explain the speaker's ability to convey positive or negative senses to the audience through language, but also express the evaluation directly or euphemistically, in which the mental state of the discourse subject can be developed intuitively by psychological affect resources. The four specific items, namely: (a) un/happiness (individuals' mood), (b) in/security (social surroundings), (c) dis/satisfaction (goal accomplishment), and (d) dis/inclination (human desire) are listed in Table 3. Social esteem and social sanction are two subsystems of judgement system.

The former has nothing to do with ethics or laws and regulations, and it is generally utilized to make appreciative or critical assessment on people's behavior, phenomena, etc., by virtue of normality (how unusual), capacity (how capable) and tenacity (how dependable); the latter one has legal implications, primarily used to glorify or condemn people's behaviors or actions, judge whether it is legal and moral, and veracity and propriety are the two main sorts, shown in Table 4. Appreciation resources are mainly used to evaluate the attributes, composition and value of phenomena and behaviors. Table 5 is the picture of reaction (attraction impact plus emotional influence quality), composition (balance plus complexity) and valuation, comprising the three subcategories of appreciation system (e.g., reaction composition, valuation). The polarity of institutionalized appreciation resources stems from their influence on the discourse subject. If positive feelings are triggered of or emphasized, positive appreciation meaning ought to be conveyed, and vice versa.

Engagement resources refer to the source of discourse attitude (how borrowed), playing a crucial role in constructing the intrinsic subject image with discussion and interpretation. In our research scope, they merely involve hetero-gloss internalized resources and otherwise the mono-gloss, the straightforward ones, with the former containing two subsystems: dialogic contraction and dialogic expansion (disparity co-existence). In view of formation regarding the engagement system, conversational contraction refers to narrowing / closing the space with other sounds, and specifically includes two kinds: disclaim (rejection of the designated; the keystone half here) and proclaim.

Graduation is used to adjust the intensity or degree of discourse attitude and participation. Force and focus are the branches. Served as intervention, the former is achieved through quantification (presented by various quantifiers) and intensification (expressed through degree adverbs) resources, while the latter, based on norms or prototypes, divides meaning from the core to the edge; both effectively adjust the narration of attitude and engagement. Dichotomy from the experiential meaning and mode of lexical expression about force denotes that quality and process are under intensification, and evaluation of the number, mass and extent of entities is the so-called quantification (extent involves proximity and distribution in time and space.

Data and Method

The study uses mixed method approach, both quantitative research with qualitative analysis to analyse the corpus. Moreover, the UAM Corpus (linguistics software) is used for minor part of speech tagging, sentence marking and general statistics. At present, the theory is concerned with the analysis of particular discourse

or category of it subject to size restriction. A corpus can help identify, retrieve and quantify appraisal resources quickly.

The research can be roughly divided into three steps: First, the speech text was inputted into the linguistic tool with the format of the source unchanged; secondly, the political discourse was marked according to the linguistic model with some details slightly altered; and third, after prospective manual identification and annotation, data were collected (orderly samples shown) and analyzed qualitatively as well. This study is then validated through concrete examples to explore what kind of China's national image is constructed by these diverse appraisal resources. The corpus of the study comprises 6,257 Chinese characters.

The research materials of the study are directly obtained from the official news report website. Document and segment coding for texts are given by UAM. With the help of the corpus tool, an effective computer-based annotation workbench for the research material is provided, and thus coding and processing the text becomes more convenient and efficient, which makes data analysis and results more pronounced and convincing. For example, segment coding is performed by self-selecting the excerpts in the texts and assigning them attributes respectively to plainly annotate and present the appraisal resources discussed in Xi's keynote speech.

Results and Discussion

The total Chinese characters of the original text are 6,257, including the opening remark and peroration. References entailing in-depth analysis about CIIE (exceeding 20,000 characters) long after the forum are unfortunately not taken into account in the political discourse. Detailed and specific illustrations are unfolded in the tables below.

Table 1

Distribution of Appraisal Resources in the Speech

Type	Percentage
Attitude	76.9%
Engagement	6.0%
Graduation	17.1%

As shown by the data in Table 1, attitude resources are used most frequently in this speech text (abundant as identified, around 80%), followed by graduation and engagement resources (the latter with the smallest proportion: 6% in fact, meaning imbalanced use of appraisal resources in Xi's public speech). Lack of engagement resources symbolizes China's preparation stage of the unforeseen trade (peculiarly import facet). Implicit and explicit words and expressions of emotions are heavily applied to clarify firm position and strength on Chinese international trade plan and economic cooperation outline. Keywords excluding function words and proper names: "*cooperation (*合作*)*", "*civilization (*文明*)*", "*common (*共同*)*" and "*world (*世界*)*" are technically referred to 47, 13, 12, 11 times respectively, and none of them has the

exclusive meaning of single independence. The cooperative elements together with widening access to foreign markets are illuminated, so as to better usher in unique coalitions with the right audience and roundly accelerate the progress of economic globalization under the linking bridge of the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

Attitude Appraisal Resources

Table 2
Distribution of Positive and Negative Appraisal Resources in the Speech

Type	Percentage
Positive	95.8%
Negative	4.2%

As displayed in Table 2, almost all of the speech texts (over 95%) belong to positive appraisal resources, and when it comes to the negative ones, only domestic and international situations are talked about due to the changeable and unpredictable outside world where China, the top-notch example in developing economies, is supposed to constantly grasp golden opportunities, embrace subsequent challenges, and even face potential threats with dynamic policies and prompt adjustments made.

Table 3
Distribution of Affect Resources in the Speech

Affect Resources	Un/ happiness	In/ security	Dis/ satisfaction	Dis/ inclination	Total	Percentage
Positive	28	10	13	4	55	94.8%
Negative	3	0	0	0	3	5.2%
Total	31	10	13	4	58	100%
Proportion	53.5%	17.2%	22.4%	6.9%		100%

The number of affect resources amounts to 58 in which there are far more positive affect resources than negative counterparts; resources featuring un/happiness weigh more than those characterized as dis/satisfaction and in/security successively. But as regards polarity, albeit compatible with security, satisfaction resources are found to take up a slightly higher proportion (about one-fourth positive). Furthermore, happiness resources (attributed as positive), over one half of the whole, outnumber the few negative ones. This shows China's positive attitude and strong desire to value and propel economic globalization and opening up policy with market circulation and expansion. Satisfaction resources rank second with 13, further demonstrating that China has effectively implemented and fulfilled previous objectives and commitments since

2013, which indeed sounds indicative of its promising future on the right track. Within the un/happiness subdivision beyond statement, three bare appraisal units display the unhappiness state and the rest keep all positive, chiefly because of traces of the undesirable circumstance around such as the adverse impact of unilateralism on China's economy brought by the possible hegemony and presumable unilateralism (anti-globalization). Inclination resources are concentrated in describing the wishes or expectations to coexist and coordinate in transnational affairs when it comes to China putting forward new initiatives on world economic development or making its will clear to settle wicked troubles in global governance.

Table 4

Distribution of Judgement Resources in the Speech

Judgement Resources	Normality	Capacity	Tenacity	Veracity	Propriety	Total	Percentage
Positive	12	31	16	5	2	66	100%
Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	31	16	5	2	66	100%
Proportion	18.2%	47%	24.2%	7.6%	3%		100%

In the judgement section, what occurs most is capacity. It is essential to note that in political discourse, the use of resources is drastically positive. The total number of judgement resources hits 66, and the proportion of social esteem resources (including normality, capacity and tenacity) is considerably higher than that of social sanction resources (including veracity and propriety), reaching approximately 9:1, and the truth is uncovered: Instead of applying ample social sanction discourse, Xi favors social esteem resources to exhibit achievements and its positive effects, China's economic potential in addition to capacity and resilience of China among the international community members. Also, this is coherent with the fact that China seldom evaluates people's trustworthy behaviour or honesty deeds based on legislation, notably in establishing harmonious relationships with others unless the absolute measures are boasted about; meanwhile, China is modestly and unswervingly practising the concept of "a community with a shared future for mankind". Hence, the suitable target to be accomplished is, to a certain extent, to attract foreign businesses to enter China's market, rendering economic exchanges smooth as planned.

These resources alike stay astoundingly positive throughout the judgement system. Capacity resources account for the largest, followed by tenacity, normality, veracity and propriety resources respectively. Plentiful capacity and tenacity resources suggest that China, as an increasingly dependable country (and has proved rather outward), is willing to stand with and capable of working for the benefit of the international community through thick and thin, further signifying China's reliability, and consequently the public will be more aware of, empathetic with and probably support China's claims to seek the optimal decision apart from sharing common interests and dividends.

Table 5

Distribution of Appreciation Resources in the Speech

Appreciation Resources	Reaction	Composition	Valuation	Total	Percentage
Positive	0	3	33	36	85.7%
Negative	3	3	0	6	14.3%
Total	3	6	33	42	100%
Proportion	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%		100%

Under appreciation system, valuation as well as composition constitutes a larger proportion of the resources relative to the reaction part. There exist 42 appreciation resources in total, with valuation ranking first, exceeding the majority of the rest; and negative sides upon reaction and composition tie. Among the components, positive appreciation resources tremendously outnumber their negative equivalents. It further indicates that Xi tends to objectively evaluate the current social cross-border issues from a global perspective. Consequently, the overall international economic situation can be clearly demonstrated, and the public will have a clear idea on what they should pursue and what measures they should take to realize and preserve a harmonious and prosperous society in the future. Thirty-three valuation resources are all positive and designed to appreciate and extrude the indispensable role of China, and to highlight how critical the "Belt and Road" Initiative hosting related activities may be. Using these valuation resources will help China win advocacy and obtain close attention of the international communities, possibly laying a solid foundation for realization of economic globalization. Reaction resources, however, are negative because emerging nations like China (more precisely 5 years ago) have been encountering and weathering external risks in order to make achievements, persistently or permanently constrained, strictly controlled or even severely sanctioned by politically as well as economically dominant and powerful steerers or rulers.

Engagement Appraisal Resources

Triple occurrence of "*say (*说*)*" and conditional "*can (*能*)*" confirm the optimistic ambition to develop the "Belt and Road", graphically portraying China's path guide image. The relevant resources appear many times, altogether three in the sequentially first ("I"; "China/we") and third ("Arabic saying") person, where the essence remains constant: outward cooperation, and the holistic structure of persuasion is gradual penetration; proofs are the ancient Arabic quotation of the latter section combined with subjective first-person narrations in both single and plural forms, rationally and effectively demonstrating relatively complete involvement when negotiating with business partners along the way.

From the speech, contraction resources reach 9 times, principally "deny" without other engagement resources. Deny resources are mainly executed to negate those discourse positions that are not recognized by China. Rich dialogic contraction resources are utilized to deliberately marginalize the discourse space to increase the

persuasiveness and credibility of China's proposals and attitudes, thus making the international community far more compliant with trust and support China in place of acknowledging the existence of multifaceted opinions, inviting pleased audience to participate in the realistic discourse communication nowadays to improve the acceptability of political discourse content and demonstrate China's inclusiveness and tolerance to sentiments of other countries, regions and areas. While China is now stepping into a stage where local complexities and global fights persist, and holding meetings that every potential participant round the globe turns eager to attend, fixed usage epitomizes China's solidarity and determination to meet the demands of the "Belt and Road" Initiative. If China realizes deep-rooted and sustainable economic growth, stability and steadiness normalcy, then more expansion resources may stand out conspicuously.

Graduation Appraisal Resources

Force appears 32 times in the political discourse, whereas focus counts solely 5 in graduation resources, which are principally used to amplify (or shrink) sentiments discourse contents convey without generating novel connotations. Repetitive "*four years (4 年)*" emphasized, Xi underscores solid bases like physical entities and virtual capital, inevitably adhering to the spirit of hard work. What is represented vividly is that Xi prefers to intensify the degree of meaning and quantify the number more than sharping or softening categories to certain heated debates: connectivity building as a result of diligence. Massive and striking quantification resources imply the exact status quo of economic society as well as the influence and achievement of the "Belt and Road" Initiative since its implementation. The employment of force and focus resources aims to showcase the intensity and reliability of the speech, enhance Xi's persuasion on business communication and cooperation for development, and reach a consensus with the putative readers as factually the diligent alternative is shaped.

From above-mentioned thorough distribution of the appraisal systems and their corresponding subcategories, we can easily discover that compared with engagement and graduation ones, positive attitude resources are the chief appraisal resources, also diverse in subsystems: happiness in affect resources, capacity in judgement resources, and valuation in appreciation resources. In terms of polarity, positive judgement resources accounted for 100% of the total. Accordingly, the massive employment of positive judgement resources can further highlight the reliability, confidence and capability of China in broadening its market, and demonstrate the inseparable role of the international community in multilateral trade. Simply, judgement resources in the attitude system, on one hand, occupy an overwhelming proportion. On the other, deny resources rank first in engagement resources. Force resources with quantification and intensification functions, the most abundant in graduation resources, are unearthed. Such keywords as "*common*" and "*cooperation*" are of high frequency. These provide sufficient data support in the next step of qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Investigation: Appraisal Meaning Test

Sometimes, China's national image regarding mutual benefits and development of the world economy is not explicitly showcased in political speech discourse owing to the national nature: the golden mean / middle course.

5.2.1 Analysis of Attitude Resources

(1) "孟夏之日，万物并秀。"(Appreciation: +valuation)在这美好时节(Affect: +happiness)，来自 100 多(Force: +quantification)个国家的各界嘉宾齐聚北京，共商(Affect: +happiness)"一带一路"建设合作大计，具有十分重要的意义(Appreciation: +valuation)。今天，群贤毕至，少长咸集，我期待(Affect: +inclination)着大家集思广益、畅所欲言，为推动(Judgement: +capacity)"一带一路"建设献计献策，让这一世纪工程造福各国人民(Affect: +satisfaction)。

> [Translation] *In this <u>lovely season</u> of early Summer when every living thing is full of energy, I wish to welcome all of you, distinguished guests representing over 100 countries, to attend this important forum on the "Belt and Road" Initiative held in Beijing. This is indeed a <u>gathering</u> of great minds. In the coming two days, <u>I hope</u> that by engaging in full exchanges of views, we will contribute to pursuing the "Belt and Road" Initiative, the project of the 21ˢᵗ century, so that it will <u>benefit</u> people across the world.*

The opening chapter mainly draws on (a) affect resources: happiness, and (b) appreciation resources: valuation to describe the lively and refreshing season: the very traditional height of summer. People may feel elated thanks to affections to express China's willingness to work with the rest of the world in order to promote the "Belt and Road" Initiative; affect resources of satisfaction is finally applied to explain the impact of the "Belt and Road" project of the century. These appraisal pavements reflect and consolidate the importance of the "Belt and Road" Initiative and China's definite determination and jubilant enthusiasm to advance its unwavering construction step by step. The extensive use of emotionally charged lexemes is intended to identify with the audience: Hopefully we are to embrace diversity and prepare the common ground for subsequent expression of participants 'cooperative standpoints.

(2) 2000 多年前，我们的先辈筚路蓝缕，穿越草原沙漠(Judgement: +tenacity)，开辟出联通亚欧非的陆上丝绸之路(Judgement: +capacity)；我们的先辈扬帆远航，穿越惊涛骇浪(Judgement: +tenacity)，闯荡出连接东西方的海上丝绸之路(Judgement: +capacity)。

> [Translation] *Over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors, <u>trekking across vast steppes and deserts</u>, <u>opened the transcontinental passage</u> connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, known today as the Silk Road. Our ancestors, <u>navigating rough seas</u>, <u>created sea routes</u> linking the East with the West, namely, the maritime Silk Road.*

Example (2) uses a wealth of judgement resources, with more appraisal materials upon capacity and tenacity, primarily to promote to the whole world that China, as the trustworthy practitioner, owns a long historical origin in open communication and free exchanges along the "Belt and Road", to celebrate the outstanding contribution of China's forefathers to the construction of the path, and to praise the courageous and pioneering spirit of the ancestors, which fits in with our resolve to perfect the "Belt and Road". In the meantime, conventional habits are regularly mentioned though contrary to British press coverage, yet positive attitudinal terms: capability resources seem available upon assessment (Zhao, Guo & Che, 2016). In other words, the same focus on the initiative indicates optimism about economic strengths of China, who is believed to build the "Belt and Road" and lead the partner countries to achieve global success soon.

(3)　　　　　从现实维度看，我们正处在一个挑战频发的世界(Appreciation: −reaction)。世界经济增长需要新动力，发展需要更加普惠平衡，贫富差距鸿沟有待弥合(Appreciation: −composition)。地区热点持续动荡，恐怖主义蔓延肆虐(Appreciation: −reaction)。和平赤字、发展赤字、治理赤字，是摆在全人类面前的严峻挑战(Appreciation: −reaction)。这是我一直思考的问题。

> [Translation] *In terms of reality, we find ourselves in <u>a world fraught with challenges</u>. Global growth requires new drivers, development needs to be more inclusive and balanced, and <u>the gap between the rich and the poor needs to be narrowed</u>. <u>Hotspots in some regions are causing instability and terrorism is rampant</u>. Deficit in peace, development and governance poses <u>a daunting challenge to mankind</u>. This is the issue that has always been on my mind.*

Indeed, never can the onlookers or bystanders inspect complicated matter in a one-sided way alone, for "challenges" linger. And in the full text of this political speech, while most of the resources used are positive, Xi notes the urgency of the contemporary domestic and international situation here such as wealth gap, regional turbulence and terrorism, leading to humans' collective dilemmas unsettled like peace deprivation, governance absence as seized human resources get pretty scarce, which is unluckily, extremely detrimental to the advancement of the "Belt and Road" Initiative. Negative reaction and composition resources constitute these appraisal resources, verifying China's necessary responses to the outside disasters. Facing up to the challenges and threats, China and its partners are suggested to work together to address the risks, and thus chances are that they will make new progress as an impregnable team in the lengthy road to the construction of the "Belt and Road". Prospective narration embody China's visions of overcoming tough periods when performance is to be managed hand-in-hand as per the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

5.2.2 Analysis of Engagement Resources

(4)　　　"一带一路"建设离不开(Disclaim: deny)和平安宁的环境(Appreciation: +valuation)。我们要构建以合作共赢为核心的新型国际关系(Appreciation: +valuation)，打造对话不(Disclaim: deny)对抗、结伴不(Disclaim: deny)结盟的伙伴关系(Appreciation: +valuation)。

> [Translation] *The pursuit of the "Belt and Road" Initiative requires a peaceful and stable environment. We should foster a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation; and we should forge partnerships of dialogue with <u>no</u> confrontation and of friendship <u>rather than</u> alliance. [*Negation does not accompany the prerequisite.]*

……这种状况不能再持续下去(Disclaim: deny)。

> [Translation] *... Such state of affairs <u>should not be</u> allowed to continue.*

中国愿(Affect: +inclination)同世界各国分享发展经验，但不会(Disclaim: deny)干涉他国内政，不会(Disclaim: deny)输出社会制度和发展模式，更不会(Disclaim: deny)强加于人。我们推进"一带一路"建设不会(Disclaim: deny)重复地缘博弈的老套路，而将开创合作共赢的新模式。

> [Translation] *We are ready to share practices of development with other countries, but we <u>have no intention</u> to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, export our own social system and model of development, or impose our own will on others. In pursuing the "Belt and Road" Initiative, we will not resort to outdated geopolitical maneuvering. What we hope to achieve is a new model of win-win cooperation. [*Conciseness is highlighted.]*

Example (4) takes advantage of the engagement system in which the majority of the resources used are contracted and mostly manifest deny property. This key characteristic demonstrates China's struggle or firm stance in building brand-new types of international relations for win-win cooperation and its innovative spirit in promoting the "Belt and Road" construction. The proficient persuasive techniques are evidently luring the anticipated members to believe in the appropriateness of the

initiative that force is forbidden, and zero games of cultural erosion are not permitted whereas conflict free mode is advocated to the utmost. The initial brave step out, meeting and getting to know each other, mutual development and movement towards happiness, peace and harmony are not regarded absolute bold measures. Humility is the heart because only when people are convinced with reason can risky concerns and doubts arising from ideological differences vanish.

5.2.3 Analysis of Graduation Resources

(5) 来自 100 多(Force: +quantification)个国家的各界嘉宾齐聚北京。

> [Translation] *I wish to welcome all of you, distinguished guests representing <u>over 100 countries</u>, to attend this important forum on the "Belt and Road" Initiative held in Beijing.*

4 年来，全球 100 多(Force: +quantification)个国家和国际组织积极支持和参与(Affect: +happiness)"一带一路"建设。

> [Translation] *Four years on, <u>over 100</u> countries and international organizations have supported and got involved in this initiative.*

这是政策沟通不断深化的 4 年 (Force: +intensification) 。/ 中国同 40 多 (Force: +quantification)个国家和国际组织签署了合作协议，同 30 多(Force: +quantification)个国家开展机制化产能合作(Judgement: +propriety)。本次论坛期间，我们还将签署一批对接合作协议和行动计划，同 60 多(Force: +quantification)个国家和国际组织共同发出推进"一带一路"贸易畅通合作倡议。//这是设施联通不断加强的 4 年(Force: +intensification)。/规划实施(Judgement: +propriety)一大批(Force: +quantification)互联互通项目。//这是贸易畅通不断提升的 4 年(Force: +intensification)。//这是资金融通不断扩大的 4 年(Force: +intensification)。//这是民心相通不断促进的 4 年(Force: +intensification)。

> [Translation] *<u>These four years have seen</u> deepened policy connectivity. / China has signed cooperation agreements with <u>over 40</u> countries and international organizations and carried out framework cooperation on production capacity with <u>more than 30</u> countries. During the forum, a number of cooperation agreements on policy connectivity and action plans will be signed. We will also launch "Belt and Road" cooperation initiative on trade connectivity together with <u>some 60</u> countries and international organizations. // <u>These four years have seen</u> enhanced infrastructure connectivity. / <u>A large number of</u> connectivity projects are also in the pipeline. // <u>These four years have seen</u> increased trade connectivity. // <u>These four years have seen</u> expanded financial connectivity. // <u>These four years have seen</u> strengthened people-to-people connectivity.*

我们要建立多层次(Force: +quantification)人文合作机制，搭建更多(Force: +quantification)合作平台，开辟更多(Force: +quantification)合作渠道。

> [Translation] *We should establish a <u>multi-tiered</u> mechanism for cultural and people-to-people exchanges, build <u>more</u> cooperation platforms and open <u>more</u> cooperation channels.*

A series of paralleling structures are enumerated here and multiplying effects can never be neglected. In graduation resources, the overwhelming use of force is stressed, and several cases are filled with focus. Quantification as well as intensification is the nucleus, yet the former is strongly mirrored in the obvious context (number or quantity) and the latter seems invisible, transmitting hidden meanings. The flexible and neatly aligned intensification is a reflection of the increasing capacity of China and other countries around the world in promoting the "Belt and Road" Initiative with multidimensional policies scrutinized. Quantification, on the complementary side, represented by repetitive modifiers "*more (*更多*)*", is the sheer manifestation of strong commitment, vigorous efforts and extensive participation of China with friends in both open and free economy construction following the initiative. Moreover, these

graduation resources are depicting the ambitious blueprint resulting from China's advantages about strengthening China's inexorable position in the "Belt and Road" Initiative and pertinent construction programs.

Conclusions and Implications

Political speeches have long been the focus of linguistic research. The purpose of the study is to analyze and interpret the distribution features of appraisal resources in President Xi's keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the "Belt and Road" Forum for International Cooperation one year before the CIIE with Chinese characteristics with the help of UAM in the light of the latest appraisal theory (namely three meta-functions of language), and to investigate into the building blocks in the speech such as cooperation and common development (preliminary focus), openness and inclusiveness etc. Economic issues are eventually attributed to political problems resonating with the audience. From the theoretical level, this study further validates the feasibility of AT in the analysis of discursive construction of national image.

Besides, the Chinese political speech is carefully taken rather than the English one especially the translated reports randomly chosen by other researchers, as the first-hand research material to further enrich and expand the research fields of applying AT to the Chinese discourse. The research also augments practicality when it comes to the realization of various appraisal meanings, bestowing the insights upon recipients to understand the interpersonal intents conveyed by Xi.

It can be concluded that China possesses an adequately optimistic attitude toward world economic development and cooperation (connectivity), effectively displaying its open, friendly, grateful, capable, responsible and cooperative national image. More positive appraisal resources are perceived and articulated in Xi's speech, with still more "attitude" in the three subsystems, and likewise, ample judgement and affect resources in the core attitudinal system are utilized in such manifesto. Exhaustive political discourse analysis provides an appropriate understanding of China's attitude and position with the subtle aid of the "Belt and Road" Initiative; compliments upon previous performance are stressed.

The tactful application of engagement resources can ensure the transmission of deepened alliance with China that the plurality longs for. Refinement through graduation resources is an unquestionable interpretation of a higher demand for China to survive and persevere in the global context, overcoming the seemingly insurmountable barriers either economically or with elevated: political ones mastered. That is to say, economic affairs are soon transformed into upgraded discourse with political functions, gaining more public support and recognition, especially in rapport with involved parties. As long as the overall environment is stable, the communities will be more likely to trust China's propositions. After all, economic integration and willingness to work with the rest of the world to promote the project of the century are reliant on mutual assistance, solidarity, collaboration and win-win cooperation under cautious approval. In brief, the speech gist of opening up, cooperation and common development cannot be unreservedly ignored.

Implications of Research

The themes of discourse analysis in China are sometimes closely related to such heated political topics as the Sino–US trade war and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. Two major aspects are mentioned in terms of moulding the political landscape. Over the years, the "Belt and Road" Initiative has been firmly supporting the multilateral trading system, promoting free trade and investment, and offering a strong impetus to the recovery and development of the global economy.

The initiative has made several new contributions to improving the global governance system, too. It appears the rightful meaning of multilateralism and free trade. Practice has fully proved that the initiative responds to the interior requirements of the change in the global governance system, demonstrating the concept of helping each other in the same boat, making Chinese ideas and solutions heard. Even in the context of the pandemic or dual circulation, the BRI upholds the principle of co-business, co-construction and sharing, not closed, but open and inclusive state; not a solo of China, but a chorus of countries along the route. Since the initiative was proposed, the outreach and connotation have been continually expanding, and the "circle of friends" is getting bigger and bigger, transforming from concept to action, from vision to reality, and eventually to a globally popular public product. Similarly, imports can drive internal demand and industrial escalation with CIIE background.

Therefore, dynamic observations to be supplemented mean change in discourse expression and resource distribution prospectively with the national influence altered. Distinctions remain to be discovered and elucidated while assertions with publicized English versions using quantitative categorization and further analysis of motivations are to be well defined and expounded since keywords in appraisal resources should be impartially selected and synthesized.

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