

The Discursive Construction of the Chinese National Image in China Daily's Reports on the G20 Summit

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Abstract

This study investigates what images of China were constructed in China Daily's reports on the G20 summit, and how this was done. One hundred and fifty samples were collected to form a corpus. Data was analyzed through *Antconc3.2.4w* under Fairclough's three-dimensional framework. The findings indicated that China Daily has constructed Chinese national images such as a rapidly developing cooperator, a voluntarily responsible, innovative and civilized country with the language resources of vocabulary, modality, tense and the collocation. The study has thus provided some implications for readers to further comprehend the positive national images of China, and for other domestic media to better their foreign publicity strategies.

Keywords: national image, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, news of G20 summit

1. Research Background

Founded in 1999, the Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (shortened as G20) is an international economic forum consisting of 20 major economies, including Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the European Union. It was originally merely an economic forum involving finance ministers and Central Bank governors, but since the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008, the Leaders' Summit has gradually been taken into the agenda. On 4th-5th September, 2016, the 11th G20 summit was held in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province. This was the first time that the G20 summit had been held in China, so there is a tremendous vacancy in the relative research pertaining to China's G20, let alone analysis about its concrete language strategies utilized in newspapers.

With the unrelenting development trend in China, some countries and regions have begun to worry about China's prosperity, which might reduce their influence on the world. Therefore, with the rapid development of media, more and more countries have taken media as a certain kind of soft weapon to further their own interests. Consequently, negative reports about China keep soaring, with no sign of this trend declining. Some people believe that the media are impartial, thanks to which people who never come to China take the "China" presented on the paper to be the real one, resulting in their refusal to rethink China. However, a report can never be too just to believe in, since "A report is the joint product of the knower and known, in which the role of the observer is always selective and usually creative. The facts we see depend on where we are placed and the habits of our eyes" (Lippmann, 1922, p. 80). Therefore, in order to be at an advantageous stage, we need to utilize media well to exert them to their full swing. Undoubtedly, G20, as an international event, where without question numerous farces have been staged and false information might have been disseminated, requires us to fully master this opportunity to rebuild the image of the Chinese nation.

Theoretically, this study takes corpus-based CDA as the method for studying language facts. Research on the discursive construction of the Chinese national image is not as prolific as in other areas. Therefore, this study may give a glimpse into ways of carrying out research in this area and attempts to sweep away potential barriers when studying it. On the other hand, practically, the study has tried to understand the national images China's mainstream media has presented to the world and, naturally, how they have realized them. In addition, hopefully this can lend support to similar studies and enable people to reflect on the role that the media plays in generating

a particular image of China.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews key notions such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and national image, and sheds light on the combination of Corpus Linguistics (CL) and CDA.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Emerging in the late 1980s, CDA is a programmatic achievement in European discourse studies of the well-known pioneers Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and others.

Fairclough (1989) pointed out that CDA is not so much a tool for analysis, as for criticism. What CDA wants to do is to show how social structures shape the form of discourse and at the same time how discourse shapes social structures. Therefore, CDA plays an important role in connecting the basic facts with the vivid social environment, unveiling the positive participation of language in social issues.

Furthermore, Locke made a list (2004, pp. 1-2) of several key words in CDA, namely “social”, “prevailing”, “discourse”, “ideology”, “power” and “textually”, which illustrates that CDA aims to study the relation between language, power and ideology, revealing how discourse originates from the relation between social structure and power, but that it, in turn, serves them. Therefore, there are at least three key determinants in CDA, “social” as a background and resources fountain; “ideology”, to dig out implications that hide behind words; and “power”, as in applying the results in areas related to a nation, and its sustainable development.

CDA is widely recognised and applied in linguistic studies in China. Dating back to the 1990s, Xin published several articles pertaining to CDA, and the monograph *Critical Linguistics: Theory and Application*, which was the first book in China to introduce the theory in a comprehensive way. In 1995, another linguist, Chen, stated his understanding about the relationship between language and ideology, which could be generalized, as text is a kind of socialized ideology under the cover of language form; language is just the form of text; and the content of text is the hidden ideology.

There are a number of other remarkable research studies on CDA aiming to dissect political or other discourses in various veins and genres as follows. In their studies, Kazemian & Hashemi (2014, 2017) have introduced an integrated approach by analyzing political discourses in light of three disciplines and frameworks. In their first study (2014), they argue that CDA can be practiced for portraying, interpreting, inquiring, and critiquing social context and ideologies reflected in texts. CDA aims to systematically look into relationships between discursive practices, the structural form of language and the external social world. In data analysis, they have mentioned that Passivization and nominalization go hand in hand in most clauses and complement each other well. Through Passivization, information about agents at the sentence level are omitted and this agentlessness in clauses is most often achieved by metaphoricity and the use of passive verbs. The passive voices are impressively applied in the context illuminating the serious repercussions of worldwide and nationwide challenges, Mr. Obama’s political opponents’ actions, his Administration’s and people’s rights and responsibilities, his office’s international diplomacy, terrorism etc. In some sentences, the orator has used by-passive voices (the use of the agent at the end of the clause) to de-emphasize the agent and underscore the event and action. However, in most cases the agent is totally removed and left implicit due to several reasons such as to avoid giving or taking blame or responsibility, to emphasize the effect or action, to make events seem more abstract, or to conceal responsibilities of certain individuals.

In their second study, Kazemian & Hashemi (2017) have analyzed ideological components embedded in three addresses of Mr. Barack Obama; the analysis is grounded in Fairclough’s notions of ideology and importance of observing the grammatical aspects of discourse, Hallidayan Grammatical Metaphor (GM) in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and some rhetorical devices. In their article, they have investigated fifteen devices and sought to perceive how they function in political texts and how the speeches, as powerful and dynamic mediums, marshal thoughts and notions as a form of action. The exemplified and dominant featured tropes and strategies of their study are *Ideational GMs* (nominalization and process types), *modality metaphor* in interpersonal GM, *modal verbs*, *politeness theory*, *passivization*, *unification strategy* (we-groups), the use of *quotations* in CDA and some *rhetorical devices* such as *parallelism*, *three-part lists*, *antitheses*, and *lexical and textual analysis*. These devices are pinpointed and analyzed in three speeches to illuminate practicality, adeptness and efficiency of the *proposed integrated approach* in the discourse of politics which is generalizable to other discourses as well.

In some other veins, Ali & Kazemian (2015) have probed a speech by Liaquat Ali Khan titled “Pakistan and the Modern World’ in light of van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model to highlight the important aspects of discourse

production and comprehension. It was mainly pursued to discover how the language of a politician pursues people in the enactment of power dominance, inequality, and the imposition of an ideology. In another study, Ali, Kazemian & Bughio (2015) have probed a reading text “*Pakistan Zindabad*” to identify problems showing the gap and unawareness on the part of teachers and students regarding the critical discourse of the text in classroom reading context.

In surveying the recent annals of literature, some other considerable studies have also inspected various political, advertisement etc. discourses in light of CDA to discern multiple strategies exploited by orators and political pundits and to show how politicians make the text/talk persuasive, significant, appealing and obscure, as well as how they convey their intended objectives to the audience (Zhou & Kazemian, 2015; Hussein, 2016; Amoli, 2016; Skarp, 2016; Carreon, & Svetanant, 2017; Gill & Kausar, 2017; Albtoush & Sahuri, 2017, etc.).

After reviewing the research of CDA in China within a certain range, Zou sorted out three research categories that have been popular in China: (1) the introduction of the CDA studies; (2) the evaluation and discussion of the theories, methodologies and development of CDA; (3) the application of CDA to specific discourses (2013, p. 38).

Prior studies in third category have tended to concentrate on some other genres and discourses. This study is unique in the sense that it attempts to bridge the gap among previous studies by investigating **what images of China were constructed in China Daily’s reports on the G20 summit, and how this was done**. One hundred and fifty samples were collected to form a corpus. Data was analyzed through *Antconc3.2.4w* under Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework. According to Rahimi & Riasati (2011), “Fairclough’s analysis has gone beyond the “whatness” of the text description towards the “how” and “whyness” of the text interpretation and explanation” (p. 109), to the effect that his way of analyzing is, to some degree, quite satisfying, with different aspects being considered, and with the process being well organized.

2.2 National Image

Image is a cross-domain topic. It has attracted scholars of different areas, varying from logical, philosophical, and psychological to sociological, and still many more areas, in order to explore its nature and try to define it. According to Collins’ dictionary, one’s image is who one is, and it also states that “an imitation or representation of a person or thing, drawn, painted, photographed, etc.”.

A nation also has its image. From the essential perspective (Men & Zhou, 2012, p. 13), a national image involves a political image, an economic image, a social image, a cultural image, a military image, a diplomatic image, a citizen’s image, and so on.

Scholars in China have given different descriptions to China through distinct research. For example, Feng & Hu (2008) described that China is a country that is “peace-pursuing”, “responsible”, and “developing”, based on the 2008 Bei Jing Olympics Games. Tan (2012) thought of the Chinese national image as the “phoenix rising”, which is a result of three main sources: “the traditional Confucian system, the victimhood image and revolutionary internationalism” (p. 1).

Studies on national image in the media have also attracted much attention from Chinese linguists. However, as Huang and Song (2012) reviewed, three insufficiencies need to be addressed in this field. First, while more attention has been paid to gender, racial discrimination, employment, education and war, etc. in the media, less attention has been paid to national images in the media. Second, the major research on national image is qualitative rather than quantitative. Third, domestic scholars have put too much attention on the opinion of external media on China, leaving less space for our own opinions.

2.3 Corpus Linguistics and CDA

Both Corpus Linguistics (CL) and CDA are relatively new in the area of linguistics, but combining them in the study of language facts is not new. Although they are superficially different linguistic concepts, they do cherish the significance of context. Mautner (2009) explained why there is the possibility of combining CL and CDA to do research on the language phenomenon. On the one hand, CL provides the possibility for CDA to study larger data volumes with the help of modern technology, instead of resorting to traditional manual methods; on the other hand, CL enables CDA to pay attention to more detailed and elaborate language facts that have previously been put aside due to the lack of a technique with which to analyse them. CL is based on objective language facts without too much artificial interruption, which to some degree ensures the objectivity of CDA and sweeps away some obstacles that have hindered its development. In the end, the utilization of CL not only makes quantitative research much easier, it also makes qualitative research quite convenient, because CL makes examination of the collocational environment of the target text, the salient semantic patterns, and how the discourse functions in a

more qualitative manner.

In order to conduct a smoother research process, four steps were involved in carrying out the research with the help of modern technology (Mautner, 2009), namely “compiling”, “running”, “analyzing” and “comparing”. First, the target corpus should be built/compiled according to relative research targets; then, after the completion of the target corpus, the corpus must be utilized by exerting its function into extreme implementation, like concordance, word list and collocation, and so on; third, the corpus can be analyzed according to the research questions we have set before; finally we need to put the results in the real environment to verify the validity of the research results by comparison, which can also be called “checking”.

In considering the advantages of the combination of CL and CDA in linguistic research, this study utilizes this combinational tool to perform a discourse analysis on the construction of national image. Besides, since national image at present has not been given enough attention, it hopes that this study may enrich its content and nature, and at the same time may guide research in this area.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

This study aims to identify the image of China that the China Daily, a mainstream media in China, has constructed through its news in relation to the international event, the G20 summit. Two research questions are presented below:

- 1). What kind of national images did China Daily show to the world?
- 2). What language resources and strategies did China Daily utilize in the construction of a Chinese national image?

3.2 Data Collection

According to Sinclair (2005), the key elements of corpus are “naturally occurring texts” and “collected”. Reports Pertaining to the 11th G20 Summit in China Daily were downloaded from the official website: <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>. The time span was from 1st January, 2016 to 11th September, 2016; i.e., from the first day of the hosting year to the exact moment that this international event was unveiled in Hangzhou.

With the retrieval tool used through the website, three key words were input to narrow down the texts-gathering scope thus: “G20 summit”, “China” and “2016”. As a result, 184 pieces of reports in total were gathered. Further processing work was done to disregard news that was not sufficiently relevant to the research questions of this study, denoting that the collection of this study is not blind but selective. As a result, 150 news items were collected for this study. The total number of word types is 6534, and the number of word tokens is 72624.

3.3 Procedures of Data Analysis

The version of software utilized in this study is *Antconc 3.2.4w*, a multifunctional tool developed by Laurence Anthony of Waseda University, Japan, with the function of basic retrievals like a keyword list, clusters, file view and concordance, etc. With the assistance of *Antconc 3.2.4w*, data processing was tremendously accelerated, and the timing for concrete analysis under Fairclough’s (1989) three-dimensional framework (see Figure 1) was mature.

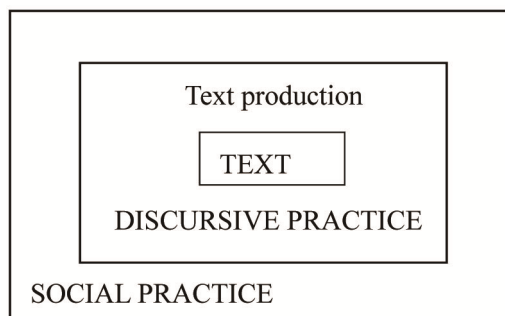


Figure 1. Fairclough’s three dimensional model for CDA (1989, p. 73)

The three-dimensional framework consists of three elements: text, discursive practice and social practice, among which “text” is the product of “discursive practice” and the whole procession includes “production”, “distribution” and “consumption”, all of which are determined by social practice. In a word, these three elements are inter-involved and closely connected. Based on this, Fairclough proposed three dimensions in the process of CDA’s actual application, which are to “describe”, “interpret” and “explain”. In the following analysis, results of this study are unfolded according to these three dimensions.

4. Types and Ways of National Image Constructed

In this section, the ways in which the data constructed a nation image by drawing upon language resources like vocabulary, modality, and voice, news sources and reporting mode are investigated. In other words, the first two dimensions of Fairclough's framework, the description and interpretation of types of national image constructed by the mainstream media, are displayed below.

4.1 China as a Contributor to World Development

Words selected from news stories have already been hinted at with personal ideology. Among 72624 tokens, with the assistance of *Antconc 3.2.4w*, a word list with all the words and their frequencies clearly displayed can be generated. The word “the” ranks as the most commonly used word, appearing 4326 times, accounting for 5.96%; followed by “and” (2211, 3.04%) and “of” (2153, 2.96%). The top three words are definite articles for a restricted subject, conjunctions for grammar and prepositions for set structures or to show ownership, which play little role in the study of vocabulary selection. Naturally, the study of vocabulary intentionally omits these functional words and takes other notional words into consideration.

Rank	Freq	Word	Lemma Word Form(s)
1	4326	the	
2	2211	and	
3	2153	of	
4	2097	to	
5	1639	in	
6	1335	China	
7	1209	a	
8	1017	G	
9	794	s	
10	787	is	
11	786	for	
12	604	on	
13	566	that	
14	561	global	
15	541	said	
16	448	as	
17	445	with	
18	444	The	
19	411	will	
20	393	has	

Figure 2. The top 20 high-frequency words

According to the data, “China” (1335, 1.84%) ranked first in notional words for the host of this G20 summit; “global” (561, 0.77%) ranked second; “growth” (378, 0.52%) fifth, which is a positive word referring to the exciting development phenomenon; “development” (189, 0.26%) ranked sixteenth; and “cooperation” (136, 0.19%) was twenty-third. Some examples which include these words are listed below:

- (1) “...important opportunities for **China** to promote multilateral diplomacy at home”
- (2) “...while participating in **global** economic governance and the provision of public...”
- (3) “G20 summit to promote green **growth** G20 to promote innovation...”
- (4) “...contributed to peace and **development** in the world”

From these examples, we can glimpse the image China Daily wants to show to the world. China is willing to be a co-operational partner with other countries for global development; and China Daily depicted China not as an

invasive “dragon” nor as a pale-faced intellectual, but as a venerable elder, impressive in bearing and ignoring repeated betrayal by certain subjects. China wants to make contributions to the world, not in her own way, but hand-in-hand with other like-minded partners, to jointly agree peaceful ways of achieving this.

Finally, since G20 is an economic forum in nature, many words like “growth” (378), “economy” (317), “economics” (315), “green economy”, “trade” (254) and “investment” (191) were been widely used to strengthen the focus of the summit. In other words, this may also show that China has a strong desire to be a contributor to global economic development.

4.2 China as a Voluntarily Responsible Country

Modality, according to the Collins dictionary, is the condition of being modal. From this perspective, we can get a glimpse of several possible conditions modality might have, such as possibility (may, might) and obligations (have to, must, need) etc. By using modal verbs or other adverbs like probably, certainly or necessarily, modality can show a speaker’s attitude to certain events or phenomena. Besides, we know that there are differences in degree when different verbs are chosen. For example, “must” shows a stronger certainty than “might”.

Among the 72624 tokens, the modal verb “will” appeared 411 times, accounting for roughly 0.57%, which is not insignificant, considering that most of the high-frequency words are articles and conjunctions. “Will” implies a positive attitude or deduction regarding certain things, therefore it can be regarded as a neutral or even a positive word. In the 411 instances of usage, the common collocations of it were “China will” (53 times, 12%), “Summit will” (45, 11%), and “growth will” (7, 1.7%), except that the remaining collocations are distributed rather sporadically. From these three high-frequency words with “will”, “China”, “summit” and “growth”, we can safely infer that, as the host country of the 11th G20 summit, China had a strong awareness of being the master and of its need to shoulder the responsibility for finding solutions to current world economic dilemmas, with a positive expectation of a bright future full of growth:

- (5) China’s plans for *growth will* help reduce global inequality in BUENOS AIRES...
- (6) Innovative *growth will* be the key topic on the G20 agenda...
- (7) ...impact of innovation in China on global economic *growth will* increase as Chinese enterprises step up efforts...
- (8) *China will* cut its carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 60...
- (9) *China will* continue to power up the world economy...

Hit	KWIC	File
1	ving economic landscape, and will help make the global economi	'A to Z' of
2	ent on climate change, China will cut its carbon emissions per	'A to Z' of
3	five years from 2016, China will further integrate its econom	'A to Z' of
4	ania and Europe. G20 China will host the 2016 G20 Summit in	'A to Z' of
5	urt. Innovation Innovation will drive development in the fiv	'A to Z' of
6	ation with foreign countries will be. For example, China and S	'A to Z' of
7	ng interests, which means it will put justice first, and pay m	'A to Z' of
8	rritorial sovereignty. China will continue to take reasonable	'A to Z' of
9	ening up. Xi said that China will continue to contribute to gl	'A to Z' of
10	l benefit. The door to China will never close and all countrie	'A to Z' of
11	headquarters, Xi said China will stick to a path of peaceful	'A to Z' of
12	r country, so that diplomacy will show salient Chinese feature	'A to Z' of
13	sitive change I expect China will deliver a technical agenda o	Agenda of po
14	what kind of leadership role will be seen at the summit. The G	Agenda of po
15	g. Decisions made by the G20 will impact on them as well. The	Agenda of po
16	Summit next month the event will provide an ideal opportunity	An ideal opp
17	he UK's next nuclear project will be Chinese-designed and buil	An ideal opp
18	f the 2016 G20 Summit, China will be able to showcase its vast	Analyst urge
19	11 provinces and cities, and will upgrade nationwide by the en	Analyst urge
20	hinese authorities, the move will cut 300,000 metric tons of n	Analyst urge
21	mized." Open energy markets will create competition and the p	Analyst urge

Figure 3. Concordance of the modal verb “will”

From examples (5), (6) and (7), we can glimpse the willing position China takes and what future growth mainly depends on, that is “innovative growth”; from examples (8) and (9) we find that China is no longer silent and is willing to let the world hear China’s determination.

Another commonly used modal word was “should”, appearing 162 times, accounting for 0.22% of 72624 tokens. According to Halliday (1994, p. 362), the modal auxiliary word is an implicit means of modality of possibility and necessity with median standards. It implies a suggestion to fulfill certain missions. The strength of it is weaker than “must” but stronger than “will”. Among 162 collocations, the most common were “G20 should” (20, 12%), “China should” (17, 10%) and “summit should” (8, 4.9%):

(10) The forthcoming *summit* **should** witness a strengthening of that pillar.

(11) *China* **should** shoulder the responsibility of recovering the G20...

(12) *G20* **should** remain committed to building an open, strong and...

Among these three examples, the significant role of G20 is repeatedly reinforced, giving strength back to the so-called “retrogressive G20”, by appealing for stronger cooperation and determination.

Other modal verbs were also employed by China Daily, like “would” (71, 1.0%), “could” (57, 0.07%), “must” (28, 0.04%) and “may” (27, 0.03%). Taking into consideration all the modal verbs involved, the words China Daily employed are to a large extent unanimous with Chinese classical ethics, or “The golden mean”, mainly taking a moderate approach to expressing attitudes. Simultaneously, positive words like “will” and “should” add bright color to moderation, showing China’s strong awareness of dealing with global issues, being not too moderate, which is often misunderstood by foreigners as salient and weak, and not too aggressive, in order to prevent invidious foreign media exaggerating the “China Threat Theory”.

4.3 China as an Active Country That Is Willing to Get Involved in Global Issues

There are two types of voice—active and passive—which are employed in the news report. Active voice is applied to transmit positive information and to show the certainty of the doer’s determination of achieving that goal. Therefore, the employment of the active voice certainly takes superiority and the use of the passive voice can denote weakness.

On account of the complexity of the judgment of the voice of sentences, in this part *Anctonc3.2.4w* was supported by manual work to make a more precise analysis of the proportion of active voice and passive voice. What is more, as the major tenses in the news were the present and past, this part took the present form of the TO BE verb “is” to retrieve the voice, and in order to simplify the whole precession of retrieval, 790 hits were arranged with the limitation of “case”, as shown in the following figure:

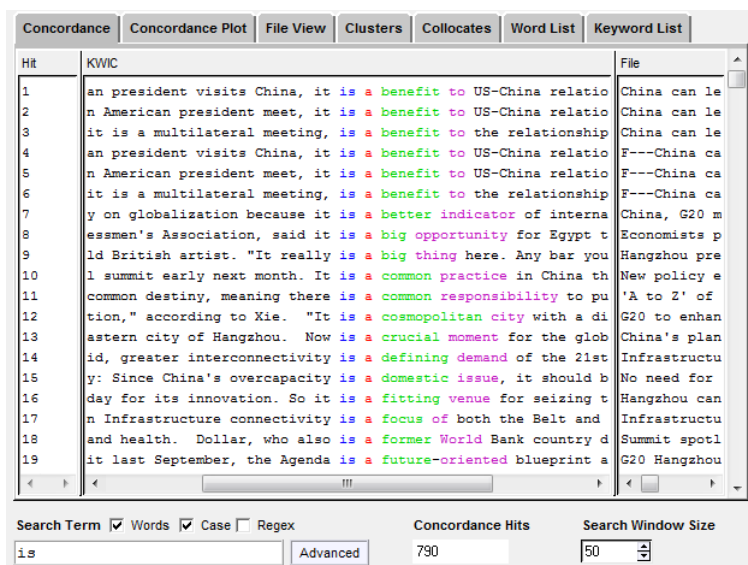


Figure 4. The retrieval of “is”

After retrieval, 101 cases of passive voice were found, accounting for 13% in the 790 cases, while the active voice amounted to 689 cases, accounting for 87%, which vividly demonstrates that reports China Daily released depicted China as a very active country that was willing to get involved in global issues. Besides, even in the 101 cases, parts involved active willingness expressed in the passive voice, such as in the terms “is committed to” (4, 4%) and “is expected to” (26, 26%).

ical party." Secondly, China is committed to business coopera	China-UK tie
push for green finance China is committed to drive forward gl	China commit
f President Jokowi, Indonesia is committed to promoting reform	G20 to enhan
stic situation, Temer said he is committed to restoring public	Hangzhou sum

Figure 5. Examples of “is committed to”

282	ig economic challenges." "It is expected that the second larg	What's being
283	economic growth. Consumption is expected to account for 60 pe	Summit spot1
284	he national economy this year is expected to achieve a 7 perce	China adds w
285	0 green finance working group is expected to announce signific	China commit
286	ASEAN's sizeable middle-class is expected to be more than doub	ASEAN, China
287	tion framework on trade areas is expected to be built, in orde	Big hopes as

Figure 6. Examples of “is expected to”

The combination of passive and active voice can enrich the flexibility of news and the utilization of them is to express different ideologies:

- (13) ...VOA) reported on Tuesday that the Hangzhou summit **is expected to** be the most *fruitful* one ever.
- (14) The initiative **is conducive to** the trend of the times...

In example (13), this judgment is from VOA and the usage of passive voice causes the delay effect, inducing us to read and find out the content of the expectation, which in return reinforces the word “fruitful”. In example (14), this active voice actually is a set structure, which causes double effects: one is to strengthen the idea that this is a fact; and the other is to stress that the whole process of gaining benefits will be smooth and natural.

4.4 China as a Country Desiring Innovation and Inclusion

Lippmann once strengthened the “selective” and “creative” (1922, p. 80) characteristics of news, which vividly reveal the subjective elements within articles. In other words, according to Xin (2005), news media carefully select information they need among numerous resources so as to reflect the quintessential information within a limited layout. This study thus utilized *AntConc 3.2.4w* to retrieve the four key words related to the 11th G20 summit beginning with “I”. These are “Innovative”, “Invigorated”, “Interconnected” and “Inclusive”. Through retrieval, words such as “innovative” (50), its noun form “innovation” (103) and verb form “innovate” (1) were counted, amounting to 158 cases.

Hit	KWIC	File
1	er the theme "Building an innovative, invigorated, interconnec	'A to Z' of
2	push on the home court. Innovation Innovation will drive de	'A to Z' of
3	home court. Innovation Innovation will drive development in	'A to Z' of
4	understands how important innovation cooperation with foreign	'A to Z' of
5	erland agreed to build an innovative strategic partnership dur	'A to Z' of
6	China has established an innovative partnership with any othe	'A to Z' of
7	een growth G20 to promote innovation, green finance and intern	Analyst urge
8	AIRES - China has placed innovation and global coordination t	Argentine ex
9	to take action by driving innovation," he said, adding that Ch	Argentine ex
10	ting comprehensive, open, innovative and inclusive long-term m	Argentine ex
11	es, such as the G20 SMART innovation plan, the global infrastr	B20 recommen
12	mmittee. The B20's SMART innovation proposal focuses on innov	B20 recommen
13	ation proposal focuses on innovative growth, a major topic at	B20 recommen
14	to promote technological innovation to accelerate global econ	B20 recommen
15	-track visa clearance for innovators and entrepreneurs within	B20 recommen
16	to promote technological innovation," Sun said. The final ve	B20 recommen
17	of consensus building and innovation building," said Feng. 0	B20 recommen
18	tform initiative, a SMART innovation initiative to encourage e	B20 summit c
19	rage entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as developing gr	B20 summit c

Search Term Words Case Regex
 Innova* Concordance Hits 158 Search Window Size 50

Figure 7. Words that are related to “Innovat*”

Following the same pattern, “invigora*” appears 27 times, “Interconnec*” 36 times and “inclus*” 79 times. Taking into consideration the frequency of these four key themes at this G20 summit, it is safe to say that China Daily attached great importance to innovation and inclusion. “Innovation” is on the agenda of China’s transformation plan, shifting from the concept “Made in China” to “Created in China”. Besides, “inclusion” follows closely in terms of frequency, showing that the development of China is inclusive, and includes embracing other countries rather than aiming to enjoy the fruits by China’s development exclusively in China.

4.5 China as a Country Managing Not to Brag about Itself

Media often carefully select a reporting mode, i.e., direct speech or indirect speech, to indicate the source of news. From the word list, “said” ranks 15th, appearing 541 times in phrases such as, “It is said that”, accounting for 0.74% of all the tokens. The present form of “said”—“says” appeared 68 times. Among the 68 uses of “says”, 48 involved the term “Sb./some expert says...”, while only 20 involved “China/The government says...” From these we can safely say that China Daily has a clear awareness of the need to be objective in their reporting and to allow others to give information, instead of China monopolizing this discourse, adding credibility to the contents China Daily displayed:

(15) ...A professor of global governance at Fudan University in Shanghai **says** China is becoming “a front-runner in boosting green finance...”

(16) Letta **says** China is working hard in its preparations to turn the G20 into a...

In these two examples, we can ascertain experts’ opinions of this G20 summit. As for the content, both give high praise to China, expressed through indirect speech, allowing the readers to feel that the praise is heartfelt and that no personal ideology has been added to the news.

4.6 Discussion

In this section, the validity and reasons why China Daily established China as a rapidly developing cooperator, voluntarily responsible, and an innovative country, are discussed.

Research findings have shown that China Daily constructed Chinese national images from multiple perspectives, which echo Men and Zhou’s proposal that national images are manifested from political, economic, social, cultural, military, diplomatic, citizen’s aspects (2012, p. 13). China Daily did not shape the image of China as a nation with a single abstract blended image; rather it did this from different angles, such as economic, diplomatic, environmental, and innovative approaches to global equality. On the other hand, the concrete image China Daily constructed is very much in accordance with Jiang’s (2013) notion that national image has objective and subjective characteristics. China Daily reported China’s real situation. Meanwhile, it utilized its right to evaluate and present Chinese national images in modern society, trying to assist participants to re-acknowledge China.

Second, as we can see all, the national images China Daily presented were not brand-new. This newspaper rather

reinforced these images to the outside world. For example, many scholars have teased out their own version of the Chinese national image. Feng & Hu (2008) stated that China is a country that is “peace-pursuing”, “responsible”, and “developing”. Tan (2012, p. 60) stated that China is a nation cherishing and respecting diversity, echoing China Daily’s “inclusive” image. Jiang (2013) reinforced that China is a nation with a developing economy, the courage of shouldering responsibility, and the willingness to cooperate (p. 69). Ma (2014) also referred to a kind of national image of the “phoenix rising” (p. 2)... All the images mentioned above vividly demonstrate that China Daily did not create new images to cater for the so-called new era; rather it represented the characteristics that still show China’s nature.

Many websites, like *Xinhua*, praised this G20 as a beacon to guide the economy of the world, as a way to convey China’s confidence, a chance to contribute (Note 1). Some popular forums like *China.com*, *dz19.net*, and *Baidu* spoke highly of China’s promotion of this national image in the world, changing perceptions from quite negative to gradually positive, from unwilling to know China to a desire to know it better. Taking into consideration many other websites, we can safely draw the conclusion that China Daily did grasp this opportunity to promote the Chinese national image in the right way. On the one hand, it showed all the contributions China has made, is making and will make to the world, and it also promised that China will not be a hegemonic-pursuing country, to the effect that China’s prosperity will only create a win-win situation, making a brand-new world, peacefully and steadily. During the G20, the media in general chose a seemingly conservative but actually active way to promote the Chinese national image.

The reasons why China is shaped as such a country with identifiers like those mentioned above have much to do with China’s current development tendency under the valid guidance of the Communist Party. Since the very beginning of President Xi’s tenure, he has emphasized repeatedly that the core of a country’s comprehensive strength is soft power. Once again media, as one of the major publicity tools, play a significant role in the consolidation of soft power. President Xi mentioned that the national image China is building includes four elements: (1) a country with historical profundity, multi-ethnic culture and harmonious civilization; (2) a powerful Oriental and socialist country with clear and bright politics, a rapidly developing economy, united citizens and splendid scenes; (3) a responsible country with a consistent pursuit of peace, cooperative motivation in the process of development, and the urge to contribute to human progress; (4) a socialist country with an enlightened open-door policy, affinity, resilience and hope, most of which has been positively echoed by the domestic media in the publicity for the 11th G20 summit (Note 2).

Apart from the political reason, China’s surrounding environment pushes China to make such responses. With globalization continuously advancing, the world community of nations are becoming ever more closely interrelated to each other. However, as the biggest developing country in the world, China has long abolished the corresponding rights of free speech, either actively or passively. Among the chaos of the news pertaining to China, the true representative of China is almost nowhere to be found. Therefore, China needs to shape the national image in a way that is not too offensive but not too passive, in order to win back support.

The current study thus gives rise to some implication for foreign publicity. According to the research findings, it is safe to say that China Daily has taken a step in improving China’s foreign country publicity. However, more effort needs to be made to ensure the solid construction of China’s national image.

(1) Domestic media should be “reader-friendly”. What media need to do is to identify their target readers in order to pick out the most suitable news style and content for that audience. According to Huang & Song (2012, p. 34), the coder cannot apply “Self-Reference Criterion” to conjecture what the target readers want, rather he or she needs to master accurately the target cultural characteristics and psychology in order to reduce self-centredness and creatively adapt to locals. This time, China Daily seems to be more flexible in its self-publicity as it has utilized more humorous elements and tried to involve readers from all walks of life.

(2) Domestic media should ameliorate traditional way of reporting. Liu (2012, p. 198) stated that excessively publicizing positive images of China and rarely touching on the negative sides will lead to the country being unable to live up to expectations and would also paralyze China’s credibility. Therefore, when the media selects news content, both sides should be involved. As for the negative side, the statement of the fact is necessary, but the emphasis should be put on “solving” it rather than “complaining”. From the findings above, China Daily has managed to demonstrate the positive change China has made, but it is important that it also continues to present the potential problems to which China needs to pay attention.

(3) Domestic media need to take the initiative. In international communication, it is important to build a positive awareness of the national image, to let it stride out and respond timely towards reports that viciously distort China’s images with credible evidence.

(4) The domestic media must not be captivated by the so-called “title attractor” to distort facts in order to tailor them to certain vulgar readers’ tastes. Indeed, the task of the reconstruction of the Chinese national image is arduous and also urgent and significant, but it does not provide excuses for employing vulgar methods. Pledging a commitment to righteous foreign publicity and refusing to ask for the moon, this time, China Daily didn’t use flatulent or over-exaggerated titles to attract attention, rather its titles were quite positive and suitable to the situation, like ““A to Z” of China’s diplomacy under Xi’s leadership” and “An ideal opportunity to enhance Sino-UK relations”, etc.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings of the Study and Implications

This study carried out a corpus-based discourse analysis under Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework to investigate the national image of China that the China Daily presented to the world during the 2016 G20 summit. It has been found that China Daily constructed the national image of a rapidly developing cooperator: a voluntarily responsible, innovative and civilized country. The constructions mainly involve four language resources: (1) the utilization of the polite formula of the economic sphere; (2) the adoption of “hedge”; (3) the extensive utilization of active voice; and (4) the selection of a news focus.

The study has theoretical and practical implications for relevant studies. First, it verified the effectiveness and feasibility of the combination of corpus-based CDA study under Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework. Second, the coherence of national images constructed by former scholars and under the background of the 11th G20 summit were verified, to the effect that there is no need to pursue new images so long as the original images still cherish the core characteristics of China and suit the development tendency of China as well. Third, it could a) provide some guidance for better foreign publicity, by being more “reader-friendly”; b) assess events through an objective and critical lens; and c) claim initiative rather than acting as a “title-attractor”.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

Despite the research methodology once again proving quite conducive to this kind of study, limitations should be stated, in order to help improve future studies in this field.

Firstly, the representativeness of data does not guarantee universality. Results of this study may to some extent extend our understanding of discourse construction in terms of national image but the results cannot be generalized to include the entire Chinese media because this study only involved China Daily, one of China’s mainstream media. More research data from China’s other numerous media need to be explored, and this should be undertaken using different theoretical frameworks to Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework in the future.

Secondly, the data under study may be insufficient in terms its number and range. It might be better if enlarged, in order to analyse a wider range of linguistics features that are beneficial to the study of this phenomenon.

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Notes

Note 1. http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2016-09/03/c_1119505455.htm

Note 2. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2014/0911/c112848-25643796-2.html>

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