

Research on the Construction of China's Image in the "Belt and Road" News Discourse Based on Positive Discourse Analysis

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This essay explores the construction of China's national image by studying the relevant reports of Chinese mainstream media on China's "Belt and Road" strategy. Based on the self-built corpus, the study of the construction of China's international image is conducted through the analysis of high-frequency vocabulary lists and index lines from the perspective of positive discourse analysis. The results show that the Chinese media are optimistic and positive in their reporting, affirming the important role of the Chinese government in the Belt and Road Initiative, expressing confidence in the Belt and Road projects, and shaping the image of a responsible world power.

Keywords: the Belt and Road Initiative, news reports, corpus, positive discourse analysis, China's national image

Introduction

The "Belt and Road" is short for the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. In September and October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the cooperation initiative of building the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Relying on the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, as well as the existing, effective regional cooperation platforms, "Belt and Road" aims to borrow the historical symbol of the ancient silk road, to actively develop economic cooperation relations with partners, and to build political mutual trust, economic integration, cultural tolerance in a community with a shared future for mankind.

Since the "Belt and Road" Initiative was put forward, China had taken concrete actions to share and exchange Chinese wisdom, technology, and solutions in the field of green development, so as to make the green background of high-quality "Belt and Road" clearer, and at the same time, let people share the fruits of green development.

Therefore, for a deeper understanding of the Chinese media's discourse strategy of reporting China's "Belt and Road" Initiative and constructing China's national image, this study focuses on Chinese mainstream media news reports of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, with the positive discourse analysis as the main research perspective and with the help of a self-built small-scale corpus, in order to explore the Chinese media discourse strategy and the construction of China's national and international image.

Positive Discourse Analysis Based on the Corpus

In 1999, at the Birmingham International Symposium on Critical Discourse Analysis, Professor J. R. Martin

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of the University of Sydney, Australia, first proposed the new proposition "Positive discourse Analysis (PDA)" in his "Positive Discourse Analysis: Solidarity and Change". In view of the shortcomings of the theory of critical discourse analysis, Martin (2006) believed that linguistic analysis should not only focus on the interpretation of "bad news" that contains inequality, but also observe "good news" that advocates peace and equality with a positive attitude and vision. Different from critical discourse analysis, the philosophical basis of positive discourse analysis is constructivism, which is constructive and aims to promote the construction of a harmonious society, which has positive significance. The positive discourse analysis based on the corpus absorbs the advantages of the corpus linguistics and the positive discourse analysis, avoids too extreme perspectives, and refuses to measure the relevant political decisions with a one-sided view of interests. In addition, through a large number of real and effective reliable materials in the corpus and in-depth analysis of text data, researchers can discover some discourse phenomena and characteristics that are easy to be ignored. In terms of corpus, positive discourse analysis focuses on those articles that are politically strong and involve major social issues. In China, positive discourse analysis was first introduced by linguist Zhu Yongsheng who made extensive discussions on its background, motivation, content, and research methods. He also conducted comparative research on critical discourse analysis and positive discourse analysis. The domestic research on the news discourse of Chinese mainstream media is mostly limited to the level of critical discourse analysis, and pays attention to the relationship between consciousness and power. This perspective is too extreme and ignores the positive effect of the news discourse of Chinese mainstream media on the construction of China's image (Huang, 2014).

To sum up, positive discourse analysis is a positive mode of discourse analysis focusing on hope and change, which has positive significance for promoting the construction of a harmonious society and makes critical thinking more oriented in the direction of being positive. Based on this, it is an effective means to explore the construction of China's image through a large number of "Belt and Road" news reports.

Research Design

Corpus Selection

This study selects reports on the Belt and Road Initiative in China's mainstream media newspapers such as *China Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, and *China Youth Daily*. *China Daily* is one of the most authoritative English-language newspapers and periodicals in China, with a wide readership and great influence, which can fully represent the country's political stance and ideology. On the one hand, the relevant reports of a number of Chinese mainstream media are selected to meet the storage capacity needs of the corpus and make the research data and research results more universal and objective. On the other hand, the selection of multiple mainstream media can appropriately avoid the one-sidedness of the research corpus caused by the media's own political tendencies. At the same time, *Guangming Daily* and *China Youth Daily* are all mainstream media in China, which also have a wide audience and extensive influence (Huang & Zhang, 2022).

By entering the key phrase "Belt and Road Initiative", this study randomly selected 30 news reports on China's Belt and Road policy with 23,189 total words from March 3, 2019 to April 4, 2023.

Text Analytics Software and Versions

The text analysis software used in this study was WordsSmith Tools 6.0. The data is presented through analysis categories, such as high-frequency word lists, index rows, and word cluster lists, so as to study the construction of China's image by news media.

Corpus-Based Analysis Results and Discussion

High-Frequency Word Analysis

The statistics of word frequency is one of the most common methods based on the observation, screening, and analysis of corpus. We hope that by retrieving the high-frequency words in the article, we can intuitively observe the linguistic characteristics embodied in the report, the image of the subject of the report, and the analysis of the construction of China's image in the theme of this study, "The Belt and Road". By using the corpus analysis software WordSmith Tools 6.0, we ranked the number of word frequencies in the established corpus, and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Table of Word Frequencies

N	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	%
1	THE	1607	6.81	31	100.00
2	AND	1145	4.85	31	100.00
3	OF	747	3.16	31	100.00
4	TO	633	2.68	31	100.00
5	IN	583	2.47	31	100.00
6	A	430	1.82	31	100.00
7	#	417	1.77	31	100.00
8	CHINA	304	1.29	31	100.00
9	FOR	250	1.06	31	100.00
10	IS	244	1.03	31	100.00
11	WITH	210	0.89	31	100.00
12	HAS	190	0.80	26	83.87
13	ROAD	189	0.80	31	100.00
14	THAT	179	0.76	30	96.77
15	AS	168	0.71	29	93.55
16	BRI	167	0.71	22	70.97
17	COUNTRIES	156	0.66	29	93.55
18	DEVELOPMENT	153	0.65	28	90.32
19	ON	152	0.64	30	96.77

We decided to eliminate the function words due to their frequent occurrence in the corpus and no practical research significance, and the results are shown in Table 2.

As is depicted in Table 2, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an important initiative put forward by China to promote economic cooperation and development among Asia, Europe, and Africa. It involves many fields such as infrastructure construction, trade, investment, and globalization and cultural exchanges. By observing the analysis of high-frequency words in the corpus, we can conclude that the selected news reports focus more on the local construction achievements in the beneficiary countries of the "Belt and Road" and the description of the relevant policies of the "Belt and Road" appear more frequently, while the appearance of the word "people" reflects the positive impact of the "Belt and Road" policy on the lives of local people. Similarly, the frequent appearance of the word "will" is the development trend of the "Belt and Road" policy in the local area, the interconnection and common prosperity between many countries, and the promotion of the development and progress of the countries along the "Belt and Road".

In the process of analyzing and studying all high-frequency words, we found that the verb "said" appeared more frequently, which also attracted our attention. Since the first stage we mainly arrange high-frequency words, so we can obtain less relevant contextual information, for the high frequency of "said" this phenomenon, our

preliminary guess is that the Chinese government has a continuous high degree of attention to the "Belt and Road", and because of its large scope of influence, more neighboring countries benefit, thus attracting the attention and evaluation of people from all walks of life at home and abroad, so the views of all parties are cited. In the following, we will extract and study the index rows of high-frequency words reported in the corpus.

Table 2

Table of High-frequency Words

N	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	%	Lemmas	Set
1	CHINA	304	1.29	31	100.00		
2	HAS	190	0.80	26	83.87		
3	ROAD	189	0.80	31	100.00		
4	BRI	167	0.71	22	70.97		
5	COUNTRIES	156	0.66	29	93.55		
6	DEVELOPMENT	153	0.65	28	90.32		
7	COOPERATION	149	0.63	25	80.65		
8	BELT	141	0.60	31	100.00		
9	INITIATIVE	128	0.54	31	100.00		
10	SAID	125	0.53	21	67.74		
11	GLOBAL	119	0.50	24	77.42		
12	ECONOMIC	116	0.49	29	93.55		
13	WILL	108	0.46	24	77.42		
14	WORLD	97	0.41	20	64.52		
15	MORE	86	0.36	25	80.65		
16	TRADE	82	0.35	23	74.19		
17	HAVE	79	0.33	28	90.32		
18	INTERNATIONAL	78	0.33	24	77.42		
19	CHINESE	75	0.32	25	80.65		
20	NEW	73	0.31	24	77.42		
21	CHINA'S	70	0.30	25	80.65		
22	PEOPLE	66	0.28	19	61.29		
23	INFRASTRUCTURE	65	0.28	23	74.19		
24	INVESTMENT	60	0.25	23	74.19		
25	ALL	56	0.24	19	61.29		

Analysis of Index Sequences

According to "Discourse Analysis From the Perspective of Evaluation Research", attribute, as an important intervention strategy, presents certain points of view in the discourse through the discourse of others, and the author's discourse retreats into the background. By quoting a certain point of view in the discourse field, the author leaves a certain space for himself to "retreat" when expressing a different point of view or an opinion that he cannot be convinced (S. S. Liu & L. H. Liu, 2012). The credibility of opinions also varies depending on the "source". "Said" is one of the typical language projects that implements the extraction strategy. Therefore, analyzing the source and content of the discourse elicited by the word "said" in the report is helpful to explore the position and attitude behind the report. According to the data in Table 2, the frequency of use of the word "said" in the selected corpus reports is 125. In the index row study, the author extracted the first 24 rows of the list, and the results are shown in Table 3.

As can be seen from Table 3, the Chinese media reports cite a large number of views from officials from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, mainly from the future development and the achievements made since the implementation of "the Belt and Road Initiative" and the positive impact it has brought to the local people, including agricultural science, company development opportunities, and economic development investment. It can be seen that the views of a large number of officials quoted in Chinese media reports reflect

the positive impact of China's "Belt and Road Strategy" on the economy and life of people around the world, and play an important role in building a good image of China to the outside world.

Table 3

Table of the Index Line of "Said"

1	working there. Wan Rosdy, who was sworn in in 2018, said under his administration, the state has taken steps to
2	as requested by the investors," he said. Wan Rosdy also said the Kuantan Port, modernized with a deep water
3	are signs of steps in the right direction," the ambassador said. "Just two months ago, President Xi Jinping and
4	, a board member of The European House of Ambrossetti, said it is important to let people know that the BRI is not-
5	of bilateral ties in an all-around way in recent years, and said that China is willing to join with the African country on
6	general manager of the company, applauded the route and said the train has provided more development opportunities
7	of Al Riyadh Newspaper, a major daily in Saudi Arabia, said Beijing's role in the Riyadh-Tehran detente as
8	at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing, said eating habits in China are changing with the country's
9	into global economic development and people's well-being, said the Ministry of Commerce on Thursday. There is
10	people, regardless of nation, religion, citizenship, beliefs," said the president. FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT For
11	social development in many countries involved in the BRI," said Shu, noting the initiative has become a popular
12	it took too many hours to get from Belgrade to Budapest," said Orban. For Serbian graphic designer Jastr Jelacic,
13	in infrastructure development and connectivity in Cambodia, said the country's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign
14	Bekturov, governor of Astana International Financial Centre, said more efforts should be placed on trade facilitation
15	will be our next step to expand our presence in China," said the French executive, adding that the company's
16	sector when no other foreign investors were coming, said Chaudhary. Noting peace is in the interest of the
17	plan initiated between the two sides at the meeting, Cui said that there have already been some "early harvests"
18	prime minister and minister of economy and development, said he hopes to see cooperation instead of competition
19	," said Jean-Marc Dublanc, CEO of Adisseo. Dublanc said the company's goal for this year is not only to supply
20	its product range and support development, Dublanc said Adisseo is building a new specialty formulation plant in
21	the most critical investment to fill in gaps in the economy, said Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Pakistani minister for planning
22	together and benefit all countries, all peoples," the expert said. Shi agreed, believing that now Europe views China as
23	Infrastructure Leader at the EY Belt and Road Task Force, said: "The gaps in infrastructure of health and
24	2013, the ambition is still the right sentiment going forward, said former World Bank president Jim Yong Kim, who is
25	a fairer and more equitable direction. he added. Georgieva said that China is expected to account for more than

In addition, China has also spared no effort to contribute to the infrastructure construction of countries along "the Belt and Road", as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Table of the Index Line of "Infrastructure"

1	synergy and a multiplying effect. In addition, infrastructure connectivity: China is working
2	Yang, Government and Public Sector and Infrastructure Leader at the EY Belt and
3	to the best of its ability. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk
4	of The Law and Governance of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. k.
5	and cooperation platforms, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the
6	an investment of \$800 million. And the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has
7	. Closely linked to the initiative are the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB),
8	BRI plays 'monumental role' in Cambodian infrastructure ASEAN, BRICS support
9	the initiative seeking to narrow the continent's infrastructure gaps, increase foreign
10	five major priorities: policy coordination; infrastructure connectivity; unimpeded trade;
11	for the members include policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade,
12	enhancing economic cooperation; developing infrastructure and roads; encouraging trade
13	the public services sector, such as developing infrastructure and tourism, and improving
14	ports", and the building of a multi-dimensional infrastructure network has been accelerated.
15	soft image by investing heavily in its domestic infrastructure and, subsequently, in global
16	the region with the goal of fostering infrastructure development and socioeconomic
17	Germany, launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which will
18	infrastructure and, subsequently, in global infrastructure as well. China's worldwide
19	space for cooperation in the field of global infrastructure development. China takes an
20	vice-chairman of private equity fund Global Infrastructure Partners, thus rejecting the
21	Road initiative is the most significant global infrastructure initiative ever seen. Looking at
22	, and call for increased cooperation in green infrastructure, green energy and green
23	for green product certification and green infrastructure construction. Besides, it has
24	component of the BRI that aims to improve infrastructure and transportation networks in
25	in participating countries. The improved infrastructure and transportation networks

A closer look at Table 4 shows that China has always been a responsible major country in helping countries along the Belt and Road build infrastructure. From the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to the global green infrastructure, China has played a key role in all walks of life in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, including close cooperation between governments, all of which affirm China's international image as a people-oriented, proactive, and responsible power.

For example: ... In 2021, China's trade in goods with the BRI countries totaled 11.6 trillion yuan (\$1.7 trillion), a new high over the past eight years and a year-on-year increase of 23.6%. ... It can be seen that the economic benefits and positive impact of the "Belt and Road" strategy on both sides of the "Belt and Road" are unprecedented.

For the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, China's leaders attach great importance to it and have made many instructions, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Table of the Index Line of "Xi"

1	Xi Focus: Boao proposals' far-reaching
2	bridge the North-South divide. In 2013, Xi proposed the Belt and Road
3	Xinhua Updated: March 24, 2023 Xi Jinping, general secretary of the
4	the BRI is a public road open to all, Xi said in his 2021 Boao speech that
5	who have visited China to promote art, Xi encouraged them to further work
6	a shared future for humanity. Just as Xi once put it in a speech in 2013,
7	, which was initially proposed by Xi in 2013. Today, the BRI has
8	into reality the visions jointly laid out by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the
9	challenges. Under these circumstances, Xi proposed the Global Security
10	its continuously expanding connotations. Xi proposed the Global Development
11	amid successive "black swan" events, Xi put forward the Global Development
12	the United Nations Office at Geneva, Xi called for fostering partnerships
13	learning and exchanges in history, Xi said. He added that the China-Arab
14	the common prosperity of humankind," Xi said. HIGH-STANDARD
15	trees that were planted at Yanqi Lake. Xi, also general secretary of the
16	equals and share equal opportunities, Xi, at the opening of the BRICS
17	unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, Xi announced China's decision to make
18	barriers. In his own words, President Xi is emphatic that the PRC will
19	President Xi has set out the clear requirements parameters
20	groundless. "When I heard President Xi make this announcement about the
21	put forward by Chinese President Xi in the Global Civilization Initiative,"
22	. It is not by coincidence President Xi is fond of referencing the saying
23	location. On Nov 11, 2014, President Xi Jinping, along with leaders and
24	. Since 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping has participated in the BFA
25	of global benefits When President Xi Jinping proposed the creation of a

For example:

1. ... Reiterating that the BRI is a public road open to all, Xi said in his 2021 Boao speech ... "We will continue to work with other parties in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation".
2. ... "When Asia fares well, the whole world benefits", he stressed again in a video speech last year. Xi called on BFA participants to continue developing and strengthening Asia...
3. ... "When I heard President Xi make this announcement about the BRI, (I thought) that is the most ambitious development project in human history", Xi said during a panel discussion entitled "The Belt and Road: Sharing the Opportunities of Development"...

Through the analysis of the above discourse resources, it can be seen that the positive affirmation of the "Belt and Road" strategy by the Chinese government and Chinese media fully reflects the spirit of China's active actions and practical actions, in the process of implementing the "Belt and Road" strategic goals. "Asia's

economic level will lead to a better world". This sentence fully demonstrates China's international image, contributes China's strength to the international construction and prosperity of the beneficiary countries along the "Belt and Road", and well interprets China's international image as a responsible country.

Conclusion and Discussion

Under the influence of a particular socio-cultural and ideological influence, the news media inevitably integrate their own positions and attitudes into the reporting of news events. Therefore, this paper aims to quickly and massively study the news corpus in a specific time period based on corpus active discourse analysis, and reveal the attitudes, stances, ideologies, and national image construction of Chinese mainstream media in the coverage of China's "Belt and Road" projects.

A country's image is an external expression of a country's self-perception, and it is also a combination of other actors' perceptions of it in the international system (Boulding, 1959). As an important part of the country's soft power, a country's image affects the cohesion of the entire nation and the sense of belonging of all citizens internally, and affects its international status and discourse power externally (Liu & Dong, 2024).

The Chinese media reported on the positive and positive situation, affirming the important role of the Chinese government in the Belt and Road Initiative, expressing confidence in the Belt and Road projects, and shaping the image of a responsible and responsible world power.

The basis of the national image is "self-shaping", but it is also inevitably affected by "other shaping", and the ideal state should be "co-shaping". It is very important to continuously expand the group of people who tell China's story well, so that more and more influential subjects, subjects in different fields, and subjects from different countries can participate in the practice of shaping and disseminating China's image (Yu & Wang, 2023).

Over the past 10 years since President Xi put forward the "Belt and Road" cooperation strategic initiative, the international community and China have achieved fruitful results in the "Belt and Road", and the "Belt and Road Strategy" has become the most popular international public good and the largest international cooperation platform in the world today, and has also become the road of cooperation, opportunity, and prosperity for the common development of China and other countries in the world.

"Discussing the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative is a continuation of the historical trend and the right choice for the future" (People's Daily, 2023). Before the opening ceremony of the 2023 Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center, President Xi made important instructions when he met with domestic and foreign VIPs. Looking at the world today, China and other countries are facing the challenges of the new era, economic development needs new impetus, and development needs to be more balanced; in this context, the "Belt and Road" is a major strategy to solve the world's development problems with the plan of China, a big country. China has the ability and willingness to promote the in-depth development of cooperation with the image of an open, inclusive, and responsible major country.

The "Belt and Road" strategy has shown the world China's values of peaceful development, openness and inclusiveness, mutual benefit and win-win results, and the image of a responsible major country, so that the establishment of a positive national image is bound to make the Chinese people have strong self-confidence and support for China's future development, and at the same time, the responsible and patriotic national image "self-shaping" has also won the recognition and respect of the international community for China, and provides a strong force for comprehensively deepening reform and harmonious common development.

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