

A STUDY OF THE IMAGE OF CHINA IN THE GOVERNANCE OF CHINA -- A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

XinYi Yao, JiaYu Chen, Fei Deng*

School of foreign studies, South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou 510642, Guangdong, China.

Corresponding Author: Fei Deng, Email: faydra@126.com

Abstract: This article employs the corpus research method, using *The Governance of China* as its source material. It begins with Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis model and takes the Five-sphere Integrated Plan as its point of departure, analysing the keywords in the political, economic, social, cultural, and ecological civilisation sphere. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the keywords in the political, economic, social, cultural, and ecological civilisation discourse in *The Governance of China* elucidates the image of China embedded in it. To a certain extent, the results of the study assist young people, society, and the global community in comprehending President Xi's series of pivotal discourses on China's multifaceted developments and the three-dimensional, dynamic portrayal of China in the contemporary era. Furthermore, the dissemination of China's narratives and perspectives is facilitated. Furthermore, it is conducive to the promotion of a positive self-image of China, which is aligned with the country's developmental trajectory and contemporary needs, as opposed to the current situation where Western discourse on China is largely limited to a narrow set of preconceived notions.

Keywords: The governance of China; Five-sphere integrated plan; Portrait of China; Corpus

1 INTRODUCTION

The cross-cultural figurative view posits that the Western image of China represents a cultural construct informed by Western imagination and knowledge. This representation, as a construct of the West as the Other in terms of knowledge and power, may perpetuate a form of imaginative oppression of China's modernity[1].

As indicated by People's Daily (2022), the "Five-sphere Integrated Plan" was initially proposed at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). This plan specifically emphasises the comprehensive advancement of economic, political, cultural, social and ecological civilisation construction as a unified endeavour. Subsequent to the 18th National Congress, the CPC Central Committee has been advocating for the "Five-sphere Integrated Plan" and the coordinated promotion of the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy. Since the 18th National Congress, the CPC Central Committee, with President Xi at its core, has been promoting the Five-sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy in a coordinated manner. This has resulted in the Party and the country making historic achievements and changes, and significant progress in adhering to the development of the Party and the country.

In consideration of the aforementioned factors, we have elected to utilise the text *The Governance of China* as our primary source material. To this end, we have employed the corpus research method and constructed five sub-corporations, namely political discourse, economic discourse, social discourse, cultural discourse, and ecological civilisation discourse. This approach has been undertaken in accordance with the overall layout of the Five-sphere Integrated Plan. Concurrently, a three-dimensional discourse analysis model is employed, with Antconc utilized to extract keywords from the five sub-corporations. These keywords are then subjected to analysis, with a focus on their characteristics and directionality within the context of text, discourse practice, and social practice. This approach enables an investigation into the image of China as portrayed in *The Governance of China*.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of translation in the formation of national, political and governmental images has been a significant factor throughout the course of human development. As a distinctive symbol, translation is not only directly implicated in the formation of the aforementioned images but also serves to disseminate them[2].

In 2013, President Xi proposed that foreign propaganda work should be conducted with care and innovation, with the objective of creating new concepts, categories and expressions that integrate China and foreign countries, and of disseminating information about China and its policies. Scholars based in China have initiated research into how the international community portrays China, examining a range of sources including foreign newspapers and media, literary works, and the film industry. For example, Zhao Xueying (2019) examines the construction of China's cultural image in Chinese and English documentaries from the perspective of multimodal discourse, while Ma Ruiqi (2022) analyses the image of China embodied in *Biancheng* from the perspective of figurativeness[3-4]. Wang Shanmei (2022) employs the lens of spatial narrative to examine the construction of China's image in new immigrants' literature[5]. Hu Yangzi (2022), for his part, applies the concept of aesthetic acceptance to investigate the portrayal of China in the context of the "Youthful Metamorphosis"[6].

A review of the extant literature reveals that Western countries, led by the United States, which enjoy the privilege of

disseminating and interpreting global culture, have engaged in uninhibited vilification and distortion of China and developing countries. Xiao Yefei (2022:24) highlighted in his research that Time Magazine characterises China as a political power with poor human rights, a rapidly ascendant economic power with no rules, a military power that persistently seeks to expand its territory, and a scientific and technological power that possesses considerable strength and ambition[7]. In the following year, Zhang Kun and Wang Zhen (2023:102) highlighted in their study of China's image in Oscar-winning films that the cultural influence of American cinema has effectively rewritten Chinese culture according to its own value system[8]. They further observed that the image of "sphericalised" China that has emerged from this process symbolises the collage and reorganization of Eastern culture by the West, and has brought the Chinese people a myth of identity that has simultaneously confused and challenged their own sense of self. The image of "ballistic" China symbolises the collage and restructuring of Eastern culture by the West, and also brings to the Chinese people the myth and reflection of their identity.

In light of the aforementioned studies, it becomes evident that there is a pressing need to construct a comprehensive image of China for the global audience and to secure the authority to speak on matters pertaining to China's image research. Furthermore, the integration of diverse theoretical perspectives has led to a burgeoning field of research on China's image from a multitude of vantage points. However, the majority of current research remains anchored in the domain of communication, predominantly relying on literary translations as its primary source material. In contrast, the exploration of official documents represents a relatively nascent area of inquiry. The majority of current studies are conducted from a communication studies perspective, with the majority based on literary translations. The study of China's self-image through official documents is a relatively new field of research.

In conclusion, we posit that there is a substantial corpus and operational basis for investigating China's self-image through a three-dimensional discourse analysis model.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research Corpus

This study employs the four-volume of *The Governance of China* as its principal source of material.

The Governance of China contains president Xi's speeches, talks, speeches, addresses, instructions, congratulatory letters, and other documents from 15 November 2012 to 10 May 2022. These documents present a range of new ideas, views, and assertions that address significant theoretical and practical questions about the development of the Party and the country in the context of the new historical conditions. They also focus on the CPC's philosophy of governance and the strategies of the new central leadership. The philosophy of governance and ruling strategy of the new central leadership group. It can be argued that this collection of texts represents the most significant and comprehensive account of China's history and development, and plays a pivotal role in shaping the discourse on China on the global stage[9]. It can be stated that *The Governance of China* in various languages serve as a conduit for mutual understanding between China and the global community. They represent not only a means through which China can present itself to the world, but also a crucial avenue for individuals in disparate countries and regions, speaking a multitude of languages, to gain insight into the perspectives of Chinese leaders[10]. Therefore, the book represents a significant resource for the self-modelling of our country's image, offering a certain degree of authority and professionalism. The Governance of China, excluding the catalogue and annotation sections, comprises 536,420 tokens and 12,706 word classes. The corpus has been divided into five sub-corporations, each of which is characterised by a distinct content and thematic focus. These five sub-corporations are: political, economic, cultural, ecological and civilisational, and social.

3.2 Theoretical Frameworks

The objective reality of language is not reflected, but rather, it is shaped by the subjective stance of the sender and the social context. Fairclough posits that language and social practice are mutually influential and constructive. Fairclough incorporated and employed Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to language, proposing a three-pronged conceptual framework comprising discourse, discursive practice and social practice[11].

The field of textual analysis encompasses the examination of language at the level of vocabulary, grammar, coherence, structure, and other linguistic elements. Discourse practice analysis, on the other hand, delves into the processes involved in the production and interpretation of texts. Social practice analysis, finally, is the analysis of the social attributes of discourse, which entails examining texts in relation to their social context, environment, and international situation, as well as the impact they have had on society.

This paper takes the general layout of the "Five-sphere Integrated Plan" as its framework. It adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis model and combines qualitative and quantitative research with the corpus to analyse the practices of keywords in the text and society in the five sub-corporations of *The Governance of China*. The keywords in the corpus are employed to analyse the practices of the five sub-categories of *The Governance of China* in text, discourse and society. This enables an understanding of the disparate initiatives and attitudes of the state in the fields of economy, politics, culture, society and ecological civilisation from the five dimensions. Subsequently, the image of China shaped by the five dimensions is analysed.

3.3 Research Methodology and Procedures

China's diplomatic image is shaped at two levels: material and discursive. At the material level, the image is formed by the impression left on individuals or groups by the actions of the Chinese government in the diplomatic field. At the discursive level, the image is formed by the perception of China's diplomacy, which is shaped by the words and actions of the government itself and by the words of others about the government[12]. Consequently, an analysis of *The Governance of China* facilitates a more precise comprehension of the ideas put forth by President Xi in the book, thereby enabling the shaping of a national image that is consistent with these ideas.

The contents of the four volumes were classified into five sub-corporations according to the Five-sphere Integrated Plan. These sub-corpora were defined as follows: economy, politics, culture, society and ecological civilisation. Secondly, Antconc was employed to generate keyword lists for the five sub-corporations, with the British National Corpus serving as the reference database. The top 20 keywords were then extracted. In the context of textual analysis, a keyword is defined as a word that appears with greater frequency in a given text or corpus relative to a comparable reference text or corpus of sufficient volume[13]. The analysis of keywords enables the derivation of the general idea of the topic, the author's attitude and stance, and so forth, in a given text or corpus. Accordingly, this study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to extract and examine the keywords of *The Governance of China* and analyse its portrayal of China across five dimensions: economy, politics, society, culture and ecological civilisation[14].

4 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Keyword Analysis and China's Image Research

4.1.1 Political profile analysis

The keywords of the political corpus of *The Governance of China* are analysed in Table 1, which can be roughly classified into three categories. The first category comprises nouns indicating specific issues, such as development, law, and governance. The high-frequency use of these keywords indicates that the issues of development, laws and regulations, style of work, and governance remain the main core issues in Chinese political governance.

The following section presents nouns pertinent to the subject matter, including terms such as "leadership" and "cooperation." The deployment of these key words illustrates that the multi-party co-operation and political consultation system, guided by the Communist Party of China (CPC), constitutes a fundamental political system of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, the CPC serves as the bedrock of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics and represents a pivotal aspect of this distinctive form of socialism.

In conclusion, the high frequency of these three key terms has successfully shaped the image of the CPC as an "efficient and conscientious" governor, as well as a significant global actor that is willing to confront challenges head-on, resolve them, and pursue progress through democratic means.

Table 1 Keyword List of Political Corpus

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	party	3263	15313.94
2	China	1415	9538.31
3	and	16400	9248.41
4	Chinese	1274	9107.31
5	we	4244	6885.57
6	governance	658	6824.33
7	CPC	601	6696.88
8	our	2416	6635.52
9	development	1451	5275.36
10	reform	873	5068.11
11	must	1716	4537.83
12	leadership	692	3998.83
13	people	1997	3951.38
14	political	1160	3853.78
15	should	1818	3666.26
16	cooperation	480	3563.12
17	law	1079	3531.06

18	socialism	494	3493.43
19	uphold	315	2809.17
20	strengthen	381	2738.90

4.1.2 Economic profile analysis

A critical examination of the keyword list allows us to identify the key economic values that President Xi has emphasised on major occasions. This analysis enables us to conclude which image of China has been shaped by these words. As can be seen from Table 2, the keywords "development" and "economy" are ranked first and third, respectively, which serves to highlight the importance that China attaches to economic development. This reflects the fact that China's current development is still centred on economic construction. Concurrently, the frequency of the terms "innovation", "reform" and "enterprises" is also noteworthy. This indicates that China has been advancing the development of a robust economic nation, dedicated to the implementation of supply-side structural reforms, and the transformation and modernization of small and micro-enterprises.

Furthermore, the terms "cooperation", "countries" and "global" are of significant importance, as they illustrate China's aspiration for collective action and mutual advancement among all nations. This serves to substantiate China's dedication to the advancement of economic globalisation and the formation of a global community. This presents China as a proactive, pragmatic, and peace-seeking economy with a focus on the greater good.

Table 2 Keyword List of Economic Corpus

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	development	1109	5760.71
2	China	614	4509.35
3	economic	750	3739.14
4	and	5577	3134.90
5	we	1628	2964.54
6	cooperation	324	2877.43
7	economy	491	2859.83
8	innovation	258	2063.50
9	should	808	2005.94
10	growth	398	1986.81
11	reform	281	1625.36
12	global	241	1556.97
13	our	633	1453.43
14	improve	235	1271.98
15	market	378	1239.10
16	countries	301	1202.17
17	promote	174	1061.62
18	governance	92	925.67
19	enterprises	133	909.51
20	globalization	69	811.82

4.1.3 Social profile analysis

With regard to nouns, the terms "people", "we", "Chinese", "China" and "development" are among the 20 most critical, reflecting the significance that China ascribes to the advancement of the entire nation with the populace as the primary focus.

From the perspective of word collocation, poverty can be associated with alleviation and improvement. This suggests that the poverty level of Chinese residents has decreased, the pressure of survival has been alleviated, and the happiness index of life has increased. This also demonstrates that the Chinese government has been successful in achieving the historic breakthrough of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

In conclusion, the aforementioned terms collectively illustrate the Chinese government's sustained endeavours in social development and its assurance in, and forward planning for, China's prospective growth and advancement. This image

portrays China as a great nation that cares for its people and strives to enhance their access to and happiness in life.

Table 3 Keyword List of Social Corpus

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	people	884	2638.15
2	poverty	308	2400.67
3	and	4142	2366.77
4	we	1188	2144.86
5	Chinese	266	1862.44
6	China	258	1623.10
7	development	404	1558.44
8	should	603	1511.28
9	our	558	1457.59
10	Party	348	1090.76
11	social	350	1076.21
12	CPC	75	923.18
13	improve	171	923.02
14	governance	84	883.91
15	alleviation	73	873.51
16	must	362	851.21
17	reform	150	776.28
18	security	190	765.18
19	strengthen	85	609.81
20	cooperation	83	576.90

4.1.4 Cultural profile analysis

The high criticality of development, culture, culture, and rejuvenation in the keyword list of the cultural dimension, analysed from the vocabulary point of view, indicates that the Chinese government places a significant emphasis on cultural development and cultural rejuvenation. The terms "socialism", "socialist" and "values" are indicative of China's efforts to establish itself as a cultural powerhouse, with the socialist core values serving as the foundation for its cultural development, which is characterised by a distinctive Chinese identity. Furthermore, the elevated criticality of the term "Communist Party of China (CPC)" substantiates the preeminent role of Marxism in the domain of ideology and China's aspiration to establish a robust socialist ideological foundation with robust cohesion and leadership.

It is worth mentioning that the key words country and exchanges in the keyword list are also of high importance, which shows that China's emphasis on culture and development is oriented to the world and the future, to the nation and the public, and to science. At the same time, the Chinese government strengthens the building of international communication capacity, and promotes China's excellent traditional culture to go out of the country and to the world while learning from the excellent culture of other countries, so that more people can understand and feel the charm of Chinese culture. It has shaped the image of China as a cultural powerhouse that attaches importance to cultural development, cultural heritage and cultural dissemination.

Table 4 Keyword List of Cultural Corpus

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	Chinese	817	6977.25
2	and	5737	3553.48
3	China	487	3381.34
4	our	803	2208.00
5	should	839	2167.16
6	we	1345	2073.87
7	people	855	2061.35

8	CPC	134	1655.39
9	cultural	292	1638.06
10	culture	291	1495.13
11	Party	454	1405.22
12	socialism	184	1370.86
13	nation	201	1135.36
14	socialist	163	945.33
15	development	308	870.98
16	must	410	849.75
17	rejuvenation	72	819.11
18	exchanges	107	776.21
19	values	169	740.29
20	strengthen	104	727.19

4.1.5 Ecological civilisation profile analysis

From the perspective of the subject, the words "we", "China" and "our" are of significant analytical importance. This demonstrates China's commitment to a people-centred approach in the development of an ecological civilisation, as well as its recognition of the necessity to address the people's requirements for an enhanced environment.

Secondly, from a thematic perspective, the prominence of words related to the environment, such as "environmental", "environment", "protection" and "protection", suggests that China places significant emphasis on the protection of its natural resources.

Furthermore, the keyword list encompasses a multitude of domains pertaining to environmental protection, including "carbon", "green", "ecological", "ecosystems", "biosecurity" and "energy". This reflects the Chinese government's recognition of the pressing national and global ecological challenges and its measured approach to analysing and responding to issues across various sectors. This serves to confirm China's emphasis on integrating a number of different policy areas, including industrial restructuring, pollution control, ecological protection, synergising carbon reduction, pollution reduction, green expansion and growth, and the promotion of the concepts of ecological priority, conservation and intensification, green and low-carbon development.

It is the responsibility and obligation of countries all over the world to protect the environment. China not only respects, adapts to and protects nature as an intrinsic requirement of nation-building, but also plans its development from the perspective of a harmonious symbiosis between human beings and nature. China's stance and actions in the field of ecological protection have contributed to its portrayal as a major power that prioritises the advancement of green development, the promotion of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, the fulfilment of its international obligations and the assumption of responsibility.

Table 5 Keyword List of Ecological Civilisation Corpus

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	eco	213	2700.16
2	and	2239	1601.26
3	development	326	1581.95
4	environmental	229	1560.15
5	we	693	1478.23
6	carbon	149	1214.98
7	environment	191	1062.67
8	green	196	1057.27
9	China	141	925.37
10	ecological	91	877.70
11	protection	128	733.96
12	should	266	626.84
13	our	245	601.04
14	must	211	568.27

15	governance	50	555.00
16	improve	96	548.35
17	ecosystems	45	517.32
18	biosecurity	31	493.33
19	promote	75	488.77
20	energy	107	483.68

5 CONCLUSION

This study employs a corpus analysis of the English translation of president Xi on *The governance of China* to examine China's initiatives, attitudes, and image-building efforts in five domains: economy, politics, culture, society, and ecological civilisation. It situates these within the theoretical framework of the "Five-sphere Integrated Plan" and the three-dimensional discourse analysis model. The study reveals that China presents itself as a great power that is assertive, pragmatic, open and tolerant, people-centred, and committed to cultural heritage and innovation, while also promoting green development in the realms of politics, the economy, society, culture and ecological civilisation. This study offers novel perspectives and methodologies for the study of China's self-image, while simultaneously providing substantial evidence to support a more nuanced understanding of China on the global stage. It is crucial to highlight that this study has solely focused on exploring China's self-image from the lens of the "Five-sphere Integrated Plan" and the lexical level of the translated text. Nonetheless, the image of China in the text or discourse can be delved into from the syntactic, discourse, and semantic standpoints. In light of the aforementioned considerations, future research on China's image, whether from the perspective of self-image or other-image, would be well-advised to commence with an investigation of the specific syntactic structures and narrative strategies employed in the English translation of the pertinent discourse texts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

FUNDING

Provincial Innovative Training Programme for Undergraduates of South China Agricultural University, "Research on the Image of China in *The Governance of China: A Corpus-based Study*"; Guangzhou Municipal Philosophy and Social Science "The 14th Five-Year Plan Project" of Guangzhou Municipal Philosophy and Social Science, "Research on the Media Construction and Communication of Guangzhou's International Image" (Project No. 2023GZGJ230).

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