A Discourse Analysis of Nigerian News Report on "A Community with Shared Future for



Mankind" from Burke's Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract: This paper attempts to explore the construction of China's image in African media by a case study of the news on "a community with shared future for mankind" in Nigerian media through an integrated approach of rhetorical analysis and discourse analysis. The study shows that Burke's rhetoric strategies such as "terministic screen" and "identification theory" used in related news play an important role in promoting the identification of the audience. In terms of the content, Nigerian media disseminate the concept of "a community with shared future for mankind" by reporting China's actions, which shows that taking actual actions is the effective way to disseminate the concept and promote the audience to identify it more easily. In terms of the sentiment, Nigerian media present a more positive view centered upon cooperation and development, which leads to the rhetorical vision that the concept of building "a community with shared future for mankind" is beneficial for the development of Africa. This linguistic feature of the reports promotes the audience to easily identify China's image constructed by Nigerian media. In this way, the relationship between China and African countries could further develop.

Keywords: New Rhetoric; A Community with Shared Future for Mankind; Critical Discourse Analysis; China-Africa Relation

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1 Introduction

The first chapter will briefly introduce the research background, the purpose and significance of this research, as well as the data collection and processing of this thesis.

1.1 Research Background

In November of 2012, Chinese president proposed the initiative of building "a community with shared future for mankind" on Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The aim of this initiative is to promote win-win cooperation and advocate to renew the world order for common development in the spirit of seeking a common ground while respecting differences. Since its inception, the initiative has provided scientific and effective solutions to the problems of global development and governance. Therefore, it has drawn growing attention from domestic and international communities.

Six years later, Chinese president delivered a speech entitled "Work Together for Common Development and a Shared Future" at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. In the speech, he put up with the idea of building China-Africa community with a shared future and set it as the pacesetter for building a community with shared future for mankind.

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With the shared future and destiny, cooperation between China and Africa has reached a new climax in recent years. For example, in the face of COVID-19, China and African countries have overcome the impact of it. During this period, China has provided vaccines and the anti-pandemic experience to Africa, and officers from Africa believe that the initiative of building "a community with shared future for mankind" is good for the development of Africa. Therefore, it has drawn growing attention from media in Africa. As Nigeria is the country with the largest population and strongest economy in Africa, its media are important for the communication of this initiative. Studying the news reported by them is conducive to understanding Nigerian authority's attitude towards this concept, which is of great significance to the long-term cooperation between China and Africa. This paper takes Burke's new rhetorical theory and critical discourse analysis as research methods to explore the linguistic features of Nigerian reports on "a community with shared future for mankind", and then analyze the social factors behind it from the perspective of linguistics.

1.2 Research Purpose and Significance

Generally speaking, news usually contains ideological orientation, which has a significant impact on the image of one country. Most people's knowledge of another country comes from media, so news from local media would affect the cognition and attitude of their audiences. This paper takes Nigerian reports on "a community with shared future for mankind" as the research object, and takes text mining and Burke's new rhetorical theory as research methods to analyze the reports in an attempt to find out the linguistic characteristics of it. By introducing Burke's new rhetorical theory, it attempts to find out the way that Nigerian media demonstrate rhetorical motives and the factors that influence the relationship between the reporters and the audiences, so as to further analyze the rhetorical methods and the implication of the text, which are helpful to accurately grasp the ideology and political psychology of Nigerian authority.

The present research is of significance on both theoretical and pragmatic aspects. On the one hand, researches on Burke's new rhetoric mainly focus on speech and translation projects and it should be extended to other genres. Through conducting the critical discourse analysis on the reports from the perspective of Burke's new rhetorical theory, the present study tries to enrich the research field of Burke's new rhetorical theory. Moreover, by revealing African attitude towards the concept of "a

community with shared future for mankind", this study will make some complements for the strategy on the dissemination of this concept, which will promote the development of the spreading efficiency of it and further develop the relationship between China and Africa.

On the other hand, explaining Nigerian attitude towards "a community with shared future for mankind" in the news texts based on Burke's rhetorical theory is also a manifestation to solve practical problems from linguistics. The use of the concept of "terministic screen" and "identification theory" is helpful to analyze Nigerian attitude towards the concept so as to have deeper comprehension to Nigerian ideology and give some suggestions. Besides, it provides readers with a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of news texts. Finally, this study intends to combine new rhetorical theory and critical discourse analysis to provide a new perspective for news texts.

1.3 Data Collection and Processing

Since China and Africa have a long history of friendship, studying the characteristics of African coverage on China is beneficial to the development of the relationship between China and Africa. Nigeria, as the most populous country and the country with almost the most developed media industry in Africa, is representative. Therefore, this paper selects Nigerian reports on "a community with shared future for mankind" for analysis.

This paper takes an integrated approach of rhetorical analysis and critical discourse analysis to interpret the news. The research procedures are as follows: First of all, the keywords "a community with shared future for mankind" are searched in the websites of Nigeria Tribune, The Sun and Punch, which are the three of the most popular media in Nigeria, then 85 related reports are selected. Secondly, R Studio and AntConc are used to analyze the data according to the discourse characteristics of the corpus. In this process, the figure of word frequency and planar scatter plot on high-frequency words in Nigerian reports on "a community with shared future for mankind" are generated with R Stadio. At last, discourses related to this concept are analyzed according to figures generated in R Stadio under the theory of identification and the concept of terministic screen.

2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews studies on Kenneth Burke's new

rhetoric and critical discourse analysis, covering the basic introduction of the two concepts and studies on them at home and abroad.

2.1 Overview of Kenneth Burke's New Rhetoric

New Rhetoric is proposed by Kenneth Burke. He defines the rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" [1]. It is a theory that focuses on the audience, the context of discourse and the use of discourse. He has developed a rhetorical theory, which is capable of explaining human behavior and is applied to almost all the discourse by him. The main concepts of it include "rhetorical motives", "symbolism of rhetoric", "identification", etc.

In Burke's view, identification is the key factor in the rhetorical act. He points out that the three methods of achieving identification are identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis and identification by inaccuracy. When people use symbolic artifacts, they are always in a situation of seeking identification. For example, if a person wants his argumentative discourse to be identified by the audience, he would add rhetorical factors to the discourse to share common feelings and thoughts with the audience, so as to achieve the goal of persuading. Furthermore, Burke describes the rhetoric as the synonym with persuasion, between which the relationship is that "identification" is the complement to "persuasion" and "persuasion" is the result of "identification" [2].

2.1.1 Studies of Kenneth Burke's New Rhetoric Abroad

The study of Burke's new rhetoric in the west began in the 1920s. In 1924, Toomer, the American scholar who is regarded as the first one to study the theory of Burke, began to study Burke's works [3]. In the following years, articles and books related to this theory were published subsequently, which promoted the development of it.

In terms of the contents of Burke's studies abroad, there are mainly four fields. The first one is the study on Burke's meta-rhetoric. The second field is the study on the relevant and similar theories of it. The third one is the study of Burke's rhetorical theory of "identification" and "Pentad", as well as other related theories. The fourth one is the application of his theory, mainly in the fields of literary criticism, rhetorical criticism, etc., among which

the application of Burke's theory in rhetorical criticism has been the most influential.

2.1.2 Studies of Kenneth Burke's New Rhetoric at Home

The study of Burke's new rhetoric in China started in the 1980s. In 1983, Gu Yueguo firstly introduced Burke's identification theory to China [4]. Years later, his student Hu Shuzhong pointed out that the classical rhetoric focuses on "consciousness", while the new rhetoric focuses on "identification" [5]. Then, based on Burke's papers, he gave a detailed introduction of the identification theory and other rhetorical theories in his works, which have become the useful reference for the studies on Burke's new rhetoric in China.

In addition to the theoretical studies, the new rhetoric has also been applied in the field of communication, society, psychology, etc. Deng Zhiyong has analyzed Burke's theory of rhetoric of motives, introduced the model of rhetorical criticism of drama, clarified the dialectical thought based on the identification theory, and analyzed the role that the identification theory plays in helping people understand the interaction in society. He has pointed out that rhetoric has developed into a discipline that transcends disciplinary boundaries. The interdisciplinary character of it is manifested in three aspects: first, it almost relates to all human actions; second, knowledge is generated in the process of rhetoric; third, it absorbs, draws on and integrates the knowledge and methods from other disciplines [6]. According to this opinion, the research field of this theory is expanded and the feature of interdisciplinary is spread.

In terms of the interdisciplinary feature of this theory, Ju Yumei has also pointed out that Burke's new rhetoric, which inherits the theory of Aristotle's classical rhetoric, integrates theoretical achievements of several disciplines and expands the research fields of the rhetoric, is an interdisciplinary linguistic study and it has a broad development space [7]. She has introduced Burke's concept of "terministic screen", based on which she has discussed the role that the rhetoric plays in national identity, which refers to a person's identity or sense of belonging to one or more states or to one or more nations, and also refers to the subjective feeling that one shares with a group of people about a nation, regardless of one's legal citizenship status. She has pointed out that the terministic screen would influence the audience's attitude towards their own country and other countries and help the

authority construct the awareness of politics, culture and nation that can be shared with the whole nation, while the ideology and attitude tendency can be analyzed in accordance with the terministic screen. From her analysis of the theory, the combination of rhetorical analysis and ideological analysis is possible.

2.2 Overview of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis, also known as linguistic criticism, originated from the late 1970s. Since the 1990s, it has developed rapidly in terms of theory and methodology and has been applied in various fields, such as literature, politics, sociology, education, communication, and so on. It would improve the ability to appreciating and criticizing various texts and reveal the meaning implied in discourse.

2.2.1 Studies on Critical Discourse Analysis Abroad

In the past few decades, studies on critical discourse analysis have drawn attentions from more and more linguists and the theory of critical discourse analysis has further developed. The well-known scholars in this field include Fowler, Fairclough, Van Dijk, etc.

In 1979, Roger Fowler introduced the concept of "critical linguistics", the theoretical sources of which were Sapir-Whorf's "linguistic relativity" and "linguistic determinism", as well as Halliday's systemic functional grammar [8]. After that, related monographs and papers have been published continuously.

Fairclough has explored the medium that connects language and social practice. In his idea of discourse analysis, the analysis of text and the analysis of society are linked, which reveals the potential connections between text and society, as well as the ideology implied in the text [9]. He has also applied critical discourse analysis to sociolinguistics and proposed the famous three-dimensional framework, which refers to context, interaction and text, and from which he tried to reveal the relation between language and power. His ideas and works have created new research field for human and social science from the perspectives of communication and sociology. The review of his view of discourse analysis helps us to construct a more practical approach to discourse analysis.

Van Dijk has proposed to study discourse from the perspective of social cognition. He has stated that discourse is not only an verbal expression, but also the interaction in certain context and the reproduction of recognition [10]. Such idea further promotes him to introduce a socio-cognitive perspective into his research on discourse analysis and emphasize the interdisciplinary study of discourse.

2.2.2 Studies on Critical Discourse Analysis at Home

The study of critical discourse analysis in China started in recent decades years. In 1995, Chen Zhongzhu published articles about critical linguistics [11], which was regarded as the beginning of the study of critical discourse analysis in China. Years later, Xin Bin has given a comprehensive explanation on the theory and methodology of critical linguistics. He has briefly concluded the systematic functional linguistics, which is the most important theoretical basis and source of methodology of the theory of critical discourse analysis. He has also discussed the general principles and methods of critical discourse analysis to help readers to clearly understand the methodology of critical linguistics and improve their awareness of discourse analysis and critical reading ability [12].

Tian Hailong has introduced that both new rhetoric and critical discourse analysis emphasize the detailed analysis of discourse used in social life, and both of them attempt to explore the ideology and power relations implied in the discourse. He has also discussed the combination of the critical discourse analysis and Burke's new rhetoric, which aims at putting up with a new pattern to combine the new rhetoric with the critical discourse analysis, so as to promote the development of interdisciplinary study of linguistics [13].

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter will elaborate the supporting theories of the thesis. It introduces the overview of the concept of terministic screen and identification theory of Kenneth Burke's new rhetorical theory in detail.

3.1 Terministic Screen

The terministic screen is an important concept in

Burke's new rhetorical theory, which reveals the motives of speakers. According to Burke's definition of the terministic screen, any language symbol will constitute a screen to show the world [1]. However, the world here is not the real world, but a virtual reality, in which the ideology of the speaker is implied. Then, the dominant ideology plays a spreading and leading role for the audience under the joint action of the terministic screen construction and conceal [14].

In the news, reporters always persuade the audience with the terministic screen, so as to achieve identification. Therefore, the analysis of it in the news is helpful to understand the ideological tendencies of the media.

3.2 Identification Theory

The success of persuasion requires the speaker to express facts and opinions with specific rhetorical skills, so that their words and actions can be accepted by the audience, and achieve a satisfactory result of persuasion. According to Burke, the rhetor has to adopt certain strategies to achieve the purpose of persuasion, for which he proposed the theory of "identification".

The rhetorical strategy of "identification" refers to identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis, and identification by inaccuracy. In general, identification by sympathy means that both the speaker and the audience have the same or similar experience, thoughts, values, etc. This is because people are more receptive to the idea of people like themselves. Identification by antithesis emphasizes that identification can be realized by fighting against the common threat or enemies. In this way, the two parties would become allies and a sense of cohesiveness can be built. Identification by inaccuracy is a powerful way to achieve identification. It usually causes the audience to unconsciously agree with the rhetor's point of view by adopting first-person pronouns like "we" and "I". This is one of the most common and useful strategies to achieve identification in daily life.

4 Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse

This chapter will analyze Nigerian news on "a community with shared future for mankind" in accordance with Burke's identification theory and concept of the terministic screen in detail.

4.1 Analysis of the Terministic Screen in the Corpus

The terministic screen has a certain motivation, which is reflected in the political discourse as an ideological guide. It can be extracted through the analysis of the themes and keywords. The analysis procedures are as follows: Firstly, analyze the themes and keywords of the corpus to find out the ideology tendency of the terministic screen. Secondly, analyze the effect of the terministic screen according to the results in the first step.

4.1.1 Analysis of the Theme

Theme refers to the main idea conveyed in a text rather than the subject of it, because a subject would reflect various ideas in different articles, which depends on the author's intention. Therefore, the analysis of the theme intends to find out the terministic screen used in the text, so as to study the ideology conveyed by the author.

According to Burke's concept of terministic screen, the speaker constructs a subjective reality by framing the audience's cognition [15]. So, in the process of the analysis of the theme, this paper studies events reported in the news on "a community with shared future for mankind" in accordance with the planar scatter plot (Figure 1), which shows the collocation and relevancy of the high-frequency words in the corpus. Then it analyzes the linguistic features in related news.

Based on the density of the high-frequency words in Figure 1, we can figure out that there are about seven topics involved in these news. They are "economy", "human rights", "COVID-19 and its control", "global public health", "the Belt and Road Initiative", "United Nations" and "security and peace". This paper will analyze two of the most representative themes in detail. They are "human rights" and "COVID-19".

In terms of "human rights", "China" is mentioned frequently in the related news, in which China's efforts in protecting human rights, democratizing the United Nations and promoting multilateralism are emphasized.

(1) It has blazed a path of human rights development that is consistent with the trend of the times and carries distinct Chinese features, thus making a major contribution to human rights progress in China and the international human rights cause.

In Example 1, it writes about China's contribution to human rights directly. The terministic screen constructed in this way makes the audience acknowledge China's positive image directly. It attempts to draw the audience's attention to China's image of a responsible world power, so as to persuade them to accept the positive role of China in the bilateral relationship.

When it comes to COVID-19, the media report the efforts that China makes in helping African countries fight against the pandemic. In the related news, it reports the assistance of China by listing the concrete emergency supplies that China offers to African countries.

(2) Chinese hospitals have been paired up with 43 hospitals in 38 African countries, and China has trained more than 20,000 African health workers.

In Example 2, it uses figures to make the audience recognize the assistance from China directly. These

figures form a terministic screen, which effects the audience's cognition towards China and makes them identity the ideological tendency of appreciating China.

From the events above in the reports on the concept of "a community with shared future for mankind", we can see that the dissemination of the concept and China's image depends on concrete actions, which provide the themes and realistic ways for the dissemination. Meanwhile, the terministic screens in these news all have the ideology of appreciation. Such findings show that Nigerian media attempt to guide their audience to acknowledge and identify the concept of "a community with shared future for mankind", which sets a solid foundation for the further development of the relationship between China and African countries.

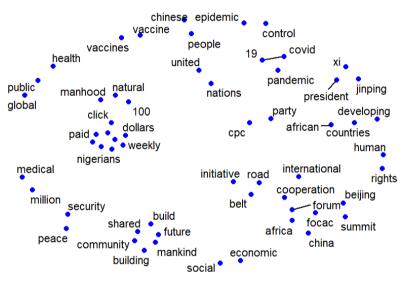


Figure 1 The Planar Scatter Plot

4.1.2 Analysis of the Keywords

Analyzing the keywords is also an important way to find out the terministic screen of a text. It is a supplement to the thematic rhetorical analysis, because it reduces the subjectivity in its analysis process to a certain extent. This section uses the method of critical discourse analysis to analyze the keywords in the corpus. In this way, the main ideas of the selected news will be presented more directly.

According to the figure of word frequency (Figure 2) below, we can find that "China" ranks on the topic of the chart and is followed by "a community with shared future for mankind". Based on the function of contextual co-occurrence in AntConc, we can find the reason is that lots of discourse in the related news is cited from Chinese authorities, which shows intertextuality. The use of the

discourse of authorities of China makes the reports more authoritative and more compelling.

Except the words related to "country", "development" and "cooperation" rank second and third respectively. With the help of the function of contextual co-occurrence, we figure out that the related news is about the development of the organizations founded to promote the cooperation between China and African countries. Besides, we also find that the sentiments of the words mentioned are almost all positive.

The results find that the reports on "a community with shared future for mankind" in Nigerian media form a positive terministic screen. It has achieved the effect in discursive communication by constructing the subjective reality which frames the audience's cognition and guides them to have more positive attitude and judgment towards China-Africa relationship [15].

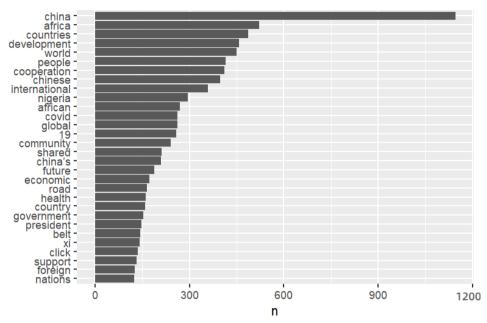


Figure 2 Word Frequency

4.2 Identification Analysis of the Corpus

The identification theory includes identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis and identification by inaccuracy.

Identification by sympathy means that the speaker and the audience have the common or similar interests, feelings or thought. In the corpus, the media report the topic of infrastructure, which is a topic concerned by almost all the people, in that infrastructures provide public services, improve people's living conditions and contribute to the economic development of the country.

(1) Under the auspices of FOCAC, China has built or upgraded over 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 100,000 kilometers of roads, 120 million kilowatts of installed power capacity, 150,000 kilometers of communication backbone networks, over 400 medical facilities and 1,200 educational institutions for Africa, creating more than 4.5 million jobs.

In Example 3, the media enumerate a series of figures to illustrate China's help to the African people in terms of infrastructure, including railways, roads, installed power capacity, communication backbone networks, medical facilities, educational institutions and jobs. By doing so, the audience in Nigeria would be more fully aware of the assistance in infrastructure from China, which will promote their identification to China's concepts and actions.

Identification by antithesis means that the speaker and

the audience have the common enemy or face the same challenges. In the corpus, a prominent topic is "COVID-19", which becomes one of the most dangerous enemies for mankind.

(2) This joint battle against the COVID-19 pandemic will surely strengthen trust, cooperation and brotherhood between our two great nations and peoples.

In Example 4, the speaker shows that the battle against the COVID-19 will surely win under the cooperation between China and African countries. The audience can easily feel the emotion conveyed by the speaker and be motivated to identify the concept of cooperation and "a community with shared future for mankind" implied in it.

Identification by inaccuracy is the most powerful way of identification deriving from the situation in which it goes unnoticed [1]. The charm of this identification strategy is that the audience may unconsciously follow the speaker's thoughts and unknowingly identify with him. George Cheney writes that "the assumed 'we' is both a subtle and powerful identification strategy because it often goes unnoticed [16]. Uses of this strategy allow a corporation to present similarity or commonality among organizational members as a taken-for-granted assumption".

(5) Everywhere we went, we were impressed with the brightness, cleanness as well as happiness and cheerful voices from the trainees.

In the reports related to "human rights" in the corpus, Nigerian media have talked about "human rights in Xinjiang" to contradict the distorted remarks in the news reported by western media. In these news, the reporter tells his experience in Xinjiang in the first person. In Example 5, the reporter uses "we" to shorten the psychological distance with the audience. In this way, the audience would unconsciously put themselves in the speaker's position and believe and identify the harmonious environment in Xinjiang.

5 Conclusion

The paper builds a corpus of African news on "a community with shared future for mankind", using Burke's concept of terministic screen and the identification theory to analyze the planar scatter plot and high-frequency words of the corpus. It finds out that the linguistic features of the reports on this concept reveal the Nigerian media's positive attitude towards China, reflect that China's initiative of building "a community with shared future for mankind" is appreciated by Nigerian authority, and construct a friendly and great image of China.

In summary, by combining the method of the critical discourse analysis with the analysis of rhetoric, this paper discovers the ideologies implied in the news reported by Nigerian media. In terms of the contents, Nigerian media disseminate the concept of "a community with shared future for mankind" by reporting China's actions, which shows that taking actual actions is the effective way to disseminate the concept and promote the audience to identify it more easily. In terms of China's image, Nigerian media build China as an image of a country that actively responds to challenges and promotes global cooperation and peaceful coexistence. In terms of the sentiment, Nigerian media present a more positive view centered upon cooperation and development, which leads to the rhetorical vision that the concept of building "a community with shared future for mankind" is beneficial for the development of Africa. These linguistic features of the reports promote the audience to identify China's image that is constructed by Nigerian media more easily. In this way, China would give a better impression on Nigerian and the relationship between China and African countries could further develop.

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Biography

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