

A Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis of " Belt and Road" Initiative in Domestic and Foreign Mainstream Media News Report --- The Case Study of *Xinhua Daily* and *the Guardian*

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ABSTRACT

In 2013, President Xi proposed "the Belt and Road" Initiative during his visit to Central Asia and northeast Asia which has vitalized global resources, created a new type of regional cooperation, and promoted global rebalancing. It has attracted great attention from Chinese and foreign media and academic circles. However, there are few scholars who carry out contrastive studies on "the Belt and Road" from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis mainly focuses on the relationship between language, power and ideology. Since CDA was proposed, it has been widely applied in news discourse analysis to reveal the hidden ideology behind the discourse. Thus, this paper collects some of the news reports on the Belt and Road Initiative from *the Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily* as corpus to conduct a contrastive study from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. With Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model as the theoretical framework, it aims to reveal the different images of The Belt and Road Initiative constructed by *the Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily* and to dig out the hidden power and ideologies behind the news reports. After analyzing the news samples, this paper has drawn the following conclusions: 1) China shows its confidence and eagerness in promoting the implementation of the initiative. In contrast, the UK has a suspicious and hostile attitude towards this initiative. 2) Text, discourse practice and social practice are interacted with each other. By using some linguistic devices like word choice, transitivity and modality in the texts, *the Guardian* misleads readers and shapes a negative image of BRI. c) News reports which hide the ideologies of writers are not totally objective, thus readers should grasp the true nature of the contradictory news accounts with critical thinking.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, " Belt and Road" Initiative, News Report, Ideology*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, it has seized considerable attention from the press and the academic field. As the most important diplomatic activity in 2017, the " Belt and Road Summit Forum" has opened a new chapter in promoting international and regional cooperation, which has been extensively covered by both Chinese and foreign media. Although China aims to show its sincerity to actively develop an economic cooperative relationship with the countries along the " Belt and Road " for mutual benefits and to establish a community of interests, some foreign countries cast great concerns and doubts over the issue. As Britain is one of the greatest world powers, It is especially worth studying its attitude towards BRI.

As a branch of discourse analysis, the critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers linguists a new perspective and an innovative mindset. It views language as a form of social practice and explores the social factors behind language. Scholars working on the tradition of CDA generally argue that social practice and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how social power relations are established and reinforced through language use. Thus, this study intends to conduct a contrastive study of domestic and foreign news reports on China's Belt and Road Initiative from the perspective of CDA. It selected 15 news reports on the BRI in the two representative mainstream media respectively: The British *Guardian* and Chinese *Xinhua Daily* as textual analysis materials to reveal the stances of China and Britain on the BRI

and dig out the hidden ideology and power behind the news reports.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of discourse to study how ideology influence the discourse through linguistic devices and social practice. It emerged in 1979 when Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew published the book *Language and Control* in which they treat CDA as an approach to study language and define discourse as language in use.

The three basic concepts of CDA are language, ideology and power. Language is the product of civilization and the major distinctive communication form of human. In linguistics, language refers to a means of verbal communication [1]. Ideology, originally referred to “science of ideas”, is the fundamental social cognition which can represent a certain group’s interests and values. Fairclough [2] claim that “it is useful to think of ideology as a process which articulates together particular representation of reality, and particular constructions of identity, especially of collective identities of groups and communities”. Power literally means the strength to influence others. Fowler defines power as “the ability of people and institutions to control the behavior and material lives of others” [3]. Power relations are influenced by language while language can be adopted by powerful social groups to reveal their power. Ideology determines how power is applied while the way ideology is applied also impact ideology. The goal of critical discourse analysis is to reveal the power, ideology and values hidden behind the language and find out how ideology and power are constructed through language.

Fairclough put forward the theory of methodology in CDA---The three-dimensional model in *Discourse and Social Change*. According to Fairclough, the analysis of discourse involves three dimensional stage: a text practice, discursive practice and a social-cultural practice [4]. Accordingly, discourse analysis has three stages: description, interpretation and explanation. At the stage of description, Fairclough adopts Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar as guidance for analyzing transitivity, modality, classification of words, etc. Interpretation refers to the discursive practice which focuses on analyzing the intertextuality, such as news source and reporting mode. The explanation stage expounds how discourse reflects social reality and in turn reconstitute it as “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned; it constitutes situations,

objects of knowledge, social identities and relationship between people and groups of people” [5].

2.2 Previous Studies on Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA derives from critical linguistics (CL) which was first proposed by Roger Fowler in the book *Language and Control* in 1979. CL views language as a social behavior driven by the ideology and tries to reveal how the ideology is expressed through the language. In 1985, CDA first appeared in *Critical and descriptive goals in discourse analysis* by Fairclough (1985). Four years later, he (1989) raised the concept of critical discourse analysis in his book *Language and Power* which deals with the relations between power, language and ideology. Fairclough regards discourse as a social practice and puts forward the Three-dimensional Model which plays an indispensable role in the theoretical framework of CDA. In 1990, Van Dijk established the magazine *Discourse and Society* which is the mark of the final birth of critical discourse analysis. He states that language can serve as a tool for the ruling classes to legitimize their interests and control the public’s ideologies. *Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* written by Wodak (1989) is also an important work on CDA, which invests language usage in institutional settings. She comes up with the discourse-historical approach which views discourse as the meaning of particular social practice. She also learns from the perspective and methods of pragmatics and develops the four-stage analysis strategy.

Domestic studies of CDA started in 1990s and since then quite a lot CDA practitioners devote themselves to the development of CDA and have made great achievement in recent decades. It was Chen Zhongzhu that first introduced critical discourse analysis into China in 1995 when he released *Review of Critical Linguistics*. Another prominent figure in CDA is Xin Bin who published the book *Critical Linguistics: Theory and Application* in 2005, which was the first book on CDA in China. He put forward the concept of intertextuality and proposed to analyze different news discourses from different news media about the same event and explores how intertextuality generates the ideological meaning in the discourse. In 2005, he published the book *Critical Linguistics: Theory and Application*, which makes a systematical study of CDA and helps domestic CDA studies enter a new period. In this book, Xin Bin (2005) elaborates on the analytical tools of CDA methodology: transitivity, classification, modality. There are also some other scholars who make great contribution to the development of CDA in China. Liu Lihua (2008) stresses the need to combine critical discourse analysis with other disciplines in his article *Critical Discourse: A Survey*. Tian Hailong (2013)

states the importance of the qualitative research in the study of CDA features when using CDA to analyze social problems. Wu Jianguo (2015) elaborates the controversy in CDA and suggests some ways to avoid it in *Critical Discourse Analysis: Disputes and Talk*. All their researches have greatly boosted the development of CDA in China.

2.3 Previous Studies on the Belt and Road Initiative

As John B. Thompson contends that the core function of mass media on ideology production and communication needs to be put under the spotlight, media actually can convey messages to audience, influencing and transforming their perception and attitudes towards the social realities[6]. In recent years, a great number of scholars have concentrated on the Belt and Road Initiative, and made some efforts to turn the limelight on relevant news reports on it. For instance, the book *Foreign Media Views on the Belt and Road Initiative* (2016) by Jia Wenjuan and Wang Hui collects more than 100 relevant news pieces from 28 countries from 2013 to 2015 in an effort to unravel the attitudes of foreign media towards BRI. This can be seen as an effort to dispel misinterpretation and prejudice from foreign media and strengthen the positive image of this grand vision. However, as ideology and values tend to be subtle and elusive hidden in discursive structures and are difficult for the recipients to “beware that ideologies are deeply rooted in their cognition and are dominating their normal practices” [7], a mere presentation of news discourses is far from enough. According to the results from some domestic and foreign prestigious academic search engines, numerous studies on this topic have pointed out the differences in attitudes, stances, policies and more importantly ideologies between China and foreign countries on this strategy. However, the majority of the scholarly analyses are carried out through the lenses of politics, economics, diplomacy or international relation. The most influential works among them are *One Belt and One Road and the Reshaping of China's Geopolitical and Geo-economic strategy* (2015) by Li Xiao and Li Junjiu; *Spatial Patterns and Economic Effects of China's Trade with Countries along the Belt and Road* (2015) by Zou Jialing, Liu Chunla, Yin Guoqing, Tang Zhipeng; *The US Perception of and Response to China's “Belt and Road” Initiative* (2015) by Ma Jianying; the newly released book *China's “Asia Dream”: The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order* (2016) by William, A. Callahan, to name but a few. It is found that language, as an indispensable part of ideological study, has not been given adequate academic attention. This is a deficiency that needs to be filled, because this thesis maintains that language can exert tremendous impact on readers by

presenting the so-called “facts” the way ideology prefers. In fact, ideology and language interact with each other and they are mutually constructive. Thus, this paper tries to detect the ideological disparities from the linguistic perspective. Additionally, considering the Initiative is an ongoing process, new development trend of the event and the latest news discourses need to be gathered and analyzed.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

With Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Halliday's systemic-functional grammar as theoretical framework, the paper aims to address the following research questions:

- 1) What are the different images of the BRI constructed by *the Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily*?
- 2) How do the two media shape the image of BRI with linguistic devices?
- 3) What factors affect the two media's news reports on the BRI?

3.2 Data Collection & Analysis

The thesis selected 15 news reports on the “Belt and Road” Initiative in *the Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily* respectively as research samples and set up a small-scale corpus. Both media have comprehensive coverage and enjoy great authority and popularity. *the Guardian*, founded on May 5, 1821, is the most serious national comprehensive daily newspaper in the UK, which covers a wide range of issues from domestic events to foreign affairs and maintained high credibility. More importantly, it is an independent newspaper free from the control of the British government and Parties. Started in 1981, *Xinhua Daily* is considered to be the most influential domestic newspaper which reports far-going issues including government policies, education, economic development, cultural exchanges and so on. From the brief introductions above, it is obvious that news reports from the two media are rather reliable. Then this study will carry out a critical discourse analysis of the selected news discourses with Fairclough's three-dimensional model as theoretical framework to analyze at three stages: description, interpretation and explanation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Description of Discourse Features

At the description stage, some of the discursive differences between the news reports of *Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily* will be examined under the guidance of

Halliday's systemic-functional grammar. According to him, the meta-functions of language can be classified as ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. Ideational function is the means by which people can make sense of reality. Mainly, it can be realized through transitivity and lexical classification. Interpersonal function refers to act on the others in the environment. It relates to the tenor of a text, which means that language not only transmit information but indicates the attitudes, stance, identity, social status and motives of the speaker. This function is primarily incarnated in modality. "The textual function shows how people organize information in the use of language, to indicate the relationship between one message and the other, and also to show the relationship between the transmission of information and communicative context of the speaker[8]." With this function, the language users can realize the relationship between context and language. This function is mainly embodied in intertextuality.

4.1.1 Lexical Classification

According to Van Dijk, lexical choice is an eminent aspect of news discourse in which hidden opinions or ideologies may surface. [9]. The classification of things by the certain vocabulary is the common practice of the mass media[10]. The author listed the some samples to excavate the differences in the reference to BRI and differences in journalists' attitudes towards the Belt and Road initiative between the two media.

First, their references to the BRI are illustrated as follows:

Xinhua Daily:

(1)*Proposed by China in 2013, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative aims to build a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa based on ancient land and maritime trade routes.*

(2)*The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is bringing the Asian country's infrastructure capital and know-how to developing countries involved in its expansion, a renowned U.S. scholar has said.*

(3)*Pakistan, which lifted its ties with China to an all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation this year, was among the first to implement the "Belt and Road" vision...*

(4)*The Belt and Road refers to a massive infrastructure strategy involving routes linking China to the rest of the world.*

(5)*Xi asked for efforts to push for progress in Belt and Road projects, especially those delivering real benefits to local people, and keep expanding the market while maintaining the balance of trade.*

the Guardian:

(1)*But many believe the Belt and Road initiative is also a geopolitical gambit to boost China's regional clout.*

(2)*Xi hailed his mufti-billion dollar infrastructure crusade as a means of building a modern-day version of ancient Silk Road.*

(3)*Much of this is bluster, but Xi is playing a serious diplomatic game.*

(4)*The plan has the potential to massively overshadow the US's post-war Marshall reconstruction plan.*

(5)*new Silk Road is at the heart of Xi's nationalistic vision, as Beijing flexes its economic muscles for strategic ends.*

Xinhua Daily prefers to call the full name of the Belt and Road Initiative or simply mentions it in plain language, like "initiative", "project" or "strategy" without any connotation. In a few cases, the alternative name is "vision", which manifests China's keen expectation to promote this grand initiative. In the contrast, *the Guardian* prones to employ words like "game", "Marshall reconstruction plan", "nationalistic vision", "geopolitical gambit" or "crusade" in reference to the strategy. These phrases add aggressive and hegemonic color to the BRI and weaken the feasibility of it. To call the BRI as a geopolitical game and crusade, it leaves a bad impression on the readers that China launched this trickery to seek for dominance in the international society. Besides, it says that the BRI may overshadow the US's post-war Marshall reconstruction plan, which may intensify the fierce competition between China and U.S. out of thin air. All these expose Britain's malicious intrigue to smear the Belt and Road project.

Second, the different stances of the two media toward the BRI are exemplified as follows:

Xinhua Daily:

(1)*He said the Belt and Road should be built into "a road of peace, prosperity, opening up as well as innovation, and one that connects different civilizations."*

(2)*"We stand ready to work with all parties to advance mutually beneficial cooperation based on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, win-win results through cooperation".*

the Guardian:

(1)*Even Chinese officials have struggled to decline the awkwardly-named scheme and a flurry of music-themed propaganda about Xi's signature foreign policy in the lead-up to this event has little clear things up.*

(2) *“Cheesy imperialist propaganda, “one critic on the newspaper’ s Facebook age “what a joke ”.*

(3) *Beijing is using its “win-win ” project as a ploy to lure less powerful nations into its orbit...*

(4) *Countries with a enmity with China, such as Vietnam and India, fear the strategic implication of China ’ s expanding tentacles.*

(5) *New Delhi has condemned China ’ s port-building in the Indian Ocean as a platform for military expansionism...*

From the samples listed above, in terms of stances on this issue, China puts emphasis on declaring that the purpose of the Belt and Road initiative is to cooperate with different civilizations to pursue common prosperity and achieve win-win results under the principles of co-existence. It also devotes a lot to showing the benefits BRI has brought to other partners, which may efficiently attract other countries to back up and join in the implementation of this project. By comparison, *the Guardian* rarely supports this programme. First, It regarded the BRI as an awkwardly-named scheme to indicate its evil-minded contempt for the initiative. Second, it delineates the BRI by utilizing the adjectives like “ambitious”, or phrases like “Cheesy imperialist propaganda” and “military expansion” to point out that China aims to steal the thunder and pursue hegemony. Third, Britain expresses doubts over the BRI by adopting the words like “boast”, “showcase” and so on.

From the comparative analysis above, it is found that China promotes the BRI to facilitate cooperation and common prosperity with other countries in a spirit of inclusiveness, openness and equality. However, the Britain is conscious of and even hostile towards the BRI by mentioning it in a pejorative and sarcastic way.

4.1.2 Transitivity

Transitivity is “the systemic linguistic term for exploring the ideational function of grammar at the level of clause.”[11]. It contains three aspects: the process types, the circumstances and the participants. According to Halliday, there are six processes: material process, mental process, behavioral process, existential process, relational process and verbal process. Each process takes a unique set of participants and the choice of process is determined by the communicative purpose and the identity of the speaker/writer.

For this reason, with the help of Wordsmith and AntConc, the author probes into the way language represents reality with different types of processes.

Table 1. the distribution of process in the two media.

Material	348	62.4	612	55.1
Mental	13	2.3	79	7.1
Relational	69	12.4	206	18.6
Verbal	111	19.9	174	15.7
Behavioral	14	2.5	19	1.7
Existential	3	0.5	20	1.8
Total	558	100	1110	100

From the chart above, it can easily come to the conclusion that material process, relational process and verbal process are the most frequent on the list. Therefore, this paper only focuses on these three processes most representative of ideological divergence between the two groups of news reports.

4.1.2.1 Material Process

Material process is the process of doing something. Every material process is expressed by an action verb, an actor (the doer)and the goal of the action (the receiver). For example, in *Xinhua Daily*:

(1) *China will facilitate e-commerce through big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence services to help Belt and Road countries fit into economic globalization.*

(2) *The Belt and Road initiative will help advance the integration of economies along the routes..*

In *the Guardian*:

(1) *Before this weekend’s summit in Beijing, China has trumpeted its commitment to the “game-changing” initiative in a barrage of state-sponsored propaganda.*

(2) *As authorities cook up grand plans to perform it and the surrounding region.*

As is shown in the examples above, the Chinese media used verbs like “facilitate” , “advance” to demonstrates its aspiration of boosting global economy and cooperation. For Britain, it used some pejorative terms like “trumpet” , “cook up” to distort the image of China and its BRI. It implies that the "Belt and Road" initiative launched by China is a sheer nonsense and China has bragged about it. It is merely a misunderstanding and contempt for the "Belt and Road" initiative hidden behind the British media.

4.1.2.2 Verbal Process

Verbal process is the process of exchanging information which involves Sayer, Receiver and Verbiage. It is a process of projection which “ encodes the inner world of consciousness, projecting it out so that it becomes accessible ” [12]. In the news discourses, the writers take advantage of the verbal process to express their own ideology and make the news appear more authoritative and credible. In *Xinhua Daily*, the major verbs used in verbal process are “say

Process type	<i>Xinhua Daily</i>		<i>the Guardian</i>	
	N	%	N	%

”, “add” or “note” . However, *the Guardian* used the word “boast” to shape China as a bumptious and narcissistic image, which indicates that *the Guardian* has strong vigilance and concern over the promotion of the BRI.

4.1.2.3 Relational Process

Relational process is the process of being which can be classified into two main types: Attributive and Identifying. The former relates a participant(carrier) to its attribute, feature or quality while the latter relates a participant(identified) to its identity, role or meaning. Some of the examples are listed in the following.

Xinhua Daily:

(1)*The Belt and Road Initiative is an option for openness and shared benefits.*

(2)*Belt and Road Initiative is an upgraded version of China's reform and opening up which will help improve the reform and opening up structure.*

the Guardian:

(1)*According to the Times of India, New Delhi believed that the scheme was “little more than a colonial enterprise debt and broken communities in its wake.”*

(2)*Tom Miller said that in many countries the attitude to Xi ’ s infrastructure extravaganza was : “the more money, the better.”*

From two examples selected from *the Guardian*, the reporter refers to the BRI as a colonial enterprise, which distorts the fact that the Belt and Road aims to promote mutual benefits. And in the second sentence, “ the more money, the better ” successfully creates an illusion that China desires nothing more than to gain further economic advantage. Thus, the description of the Belt and Road initiative in *the Guardian* is just one-sided. However, according to the account of Chinese media, the BRI is “an upgraded version of China's reform and opening up” to pursue openness and shared benefits.

4.1.3 Modal verb

Modality is a major exponent of the interpersonal function of language, which establishes the degree of authority of an utterance. Halliday (2004)divided the modal values into three categories: low, median and high, as is shown in the following chart.

Table 2. The classification of the modal values

	Low	Median	High
positive	Can,could, may,might	will,would, shall,should	must,need Has/have to
negative	Couldn't, needn't	Won't, shouldn't	Can't,ought n't to,mayn't

With the help of Wordsmith, the author lists the statistics of the distributions of the modal verbs in the two media in the Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of the modal values

Modal value	<i>Xinhua Daily</i>		<i>the Guardian</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Low	27	38.6	82	39.4
Median	31	44.3	110	52.9
High	12	17.1	16	7.7
Total	70	100	208	100

From the chart above, it can be seen that in both *Xinhua Daily* and *the Guardian*, the modal verbs of high value are the least frequent while the modal verbs of median value take up the largest proportion, which means that these utterances tend to be moderate or weak in tone. It coincides with the fact that news reports are supposed to influence readers in a naturalized way rather than making over judgments.

the Guardian casts doubts on the Belt and Road initiative and its sincerity to achieve mutual benefits. In the samples from *the Guardian*, all the three kinds of modal verbs are used as follows:

China’s rise will bring many economic opportunities, but it could have politically devastating consequences.

On a visit to China this year, the French President, Emmanuel Macron, said he had reservation about the project and that the initiative should benefit the region not be a “one way street” .

Such initiative must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality ” , it said.

In the first example, the reporter used “could” which is a modal verb of low value to indicate uncertainty about whether the China’ s BRI will have bad impact on politics. It shows Britain’ s doubts over China’ s sincerity. The second example used “should ” indicates that France will cooperate with China only if the BRI is carried out for win-win results and mutual benefits, which also reveals its concerns about the influences of the BRI on France. The third example adopts a modal verb of high value--- “must” to show the rigor requirements for China’ s BRI and doubts over the issue.

Instead, China is rather moderate in publishing the Belt and Road and frequently uses “will” in the statements about its purposes and strategies pertaining to this initiative. As it can be seen in the following examples selected from *Xinhua Daily*.

China will facilitate e-commerce through big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence services to help Belt and Road countries develop digital economy and fit into economic globalization.

The the Belt and Road Initiative is an upgraded version of China's reform and opening up which will help improve the reform and opening up structure.

"As the Belt and Road Initiative is extended and expanded overseas, it will afford a similar foundation on which developing countries can jump-start their own development on lines achieved by China over the past three decades," he said.

These sentences all adopt the modal verb of median value--- "will" to clarify the real goals of the implementation of the BRI, which can make the BRI appear authoritative and reliable.

To sum up, the British media embraces doubts over China's sincerity and expresses scathing comments through the manipulation of modality. The negative ideology behind the news discourses is the fear that China will reshape the current balance power and seek hegemony in the globe. On the contrary, the Chinese media utilizes many modal verbs of median value to demonstrate its determination to pursue equality and mutual benefits in a modest tone.

4.2 Interpretation through Intertextuality

According to Fairclough, intertextuality is basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth. It is the production of news discourses, which aims to discover the relationship between the discursive practice and the text. At the stage of interpretation through intertextuality, news sources and reporting mode will be analyzed.

4.2.1 News Source Analysis

News source refers to the source of information that news reporters quote in the news pieces. According to Xin Bin (1998), there are three kinds of news sources: 1) specific news source, giving the detailed information of the speaker of the quotation such as the speaker's full name, identity, profession, social status and other personal information; 2) semi-specific news source, providing general or vague introduction of the speaker; 3) unspecified news source, indicating no trace of the speaker. A detailed table of news sources of *Xinhua Daily* and *the Guardian* can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. News Sources in the two samples

Source	<i>Xinhua Daily</i>		<i>the Guardian</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Specific	69	77.5	102	64.2
Semi-specific	20	22.5	45	28.3
Unspecified	0	0	12	7.5

Some similarities can be detected easily from the table: Both *Xinhua Daily* and *the Guardian* prefer to

cite specific sources by clearly presenting the identity of the discourse producers to make the news reports authoritative and persuasive. However, there are more semi-specific and unspecified news sources in *the Guardian* than that in *Xinhua Daily*.

As can be demonstrated in the following examples selected from *the Guardian*.

But many believe that the Belt and Road initiative is also a geopolitical gambit to boost China's regional clout at a time when Donald Trump's US look to be stepping back from Asia.

Some point out that since the Belt and Road initiative began in 2013 trade between Xinjing and foreign countries has actually fallen.

"Cheesy imperialist propaganda," one critic wrote in the newspaper's Facebook page.

The examples above are semi-specific and unspecified news sources. The three examples are all critical and disapproving of China's BRI, serving to send the message that China's Belt and Road initiative is a kind of imperialist expansion and has little chance to achieve success. In these cases, the objectivity and authority of the texts will be impaired. As readers have no idea trace the news sources, reporters are likely to give ambiguous origin of the quotation and cover up the facts through intertextuality to mislead the mass and shape a negative image of the BRI. In this way, the discourse producers can not only indirectly express their own opinions but also shirk the responsibility of circulating false information. Thus, the strategy of anonymity may partly indicate the viewpoints of the reporters to this issue.

4.2.2 Reporting Mode Analysis

According to Fairclough, modes of discourse representation can be divided into three categories: Direct Discourse (DD), Indirect Discourse (ID) and Direct Discourse Slipping(DDS). Direct discourse means that the original utterances are quoted without any changes in the content and form, which can make the news discourse more cogent and indirectly manifest the media's stances. Indirect discourse implies that the original utterances have been interpreted in a new way by the news reporters, which can integrate the reporter's own opinions concerning the topic in news discourse. Although DDS always makes up the smallest percentage in the news reports, news reporters often apply it as a tool to blur the boundary between the direct discourse and indirect discourse and subtly manipulate the viewpoints of the readers. A detailed table of reporting mode of *Xinhua Daily* and *the Guardian* can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Reporting Mode in the two samples

		<i>Xinhua Daily</i>		<i>the Guardian</i>	
		N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Mode	DD	40	35.7	64	40.3
	ID	62	55.4	54	33.4
	DDS	10	8.9	41	26.3

As shown in the chart above, *Xinhua Daily* applies more indirect discourses than direct discourses while in *the Guardian*, there are more direct discourses than indirect ones. The discrepancy in the modes of reporting makes *the Guardian* more reliable and persuasive. For instance:

Direct Discourse:

"As the Belt and Road Initiative is extended and expanded overseas, it will afford a similar foundation on which developing countries can jump-start their own development on lines achieved by China over the past three decades," he said.(Xinhua Daily)

Indirect discourse:

The Victorian government has said the federal government was not being consistent because an MOU between Australia and China signed last year about cooperation on infrastructure projects in third countries was kept secret.(the Guardian)

Direct discourse slipping:

While trade liberalization and market forces are important for resource allocation and growth, inclusive industrialization-led development "cannot be left to market forces alone," he said.(Xinhua Daily)

Admittedly, without any change in the form or content, direct discourse appears to be more trustworthy to the readers. For this reason, Chinese media are supposed to learn from *the Guardian* to cite more original quotations to achieve efficient publicity. Indirect discourse which interpreters or paraphrases the original content is likely to be incorporated with the writers' ideology concerning the issue. Thus, Chinese media can better adopt discursive power by using a few indirect discourse to disseminate its ideologies. Although direct discourse slipping is least adopted by the two newspapers, it also needs to be examined to reveal the distinctions between the two media. The Chinese media tend to put the essential comments inside the quotation marks and leave the unimportant parts outside in order to emphasize key points and avert doubts. However, the British media employ DDS as a tool to blur the boundary between direct and indirect discourse by putting the judgement outside the quotation marks which can control the ideology of readers to some degree. The direct discourse slipping used in *the Guardian* seems to express its suspicion and defiance of the BRI.

4.3 Ideological Explanation for Discourse Differences

The explanation stage is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social determination of the process of production and interpretation and their social effects(Fairclough, 1998).

4.3.1 Explanation from Economic Perspective

Thanks to the reform and opening-up policy, China's economy has achieved unprecedented rapid development and has become an important factor affecting the economic trends of the entire world. The Chinese industry is not only very comprehensive, but also ranks the top five in the world. In the emerging industries like big data, artificial intelligence, China's Ali, Huawei, Tencent and other companies are among the world's top list. Moreover, China's industry is still growing at a high rate against the backdrop of slow or even stagnant economic growth in developed countries. Therefore, due to the economic influence of China, Western political interest groups are eager to maintain good cooperation with China in economic development to expand their own economic strength. At the same time, they are also afraid that the China's rise will put pressure on the development of their own interests. After the Second World War, Western countries generally held the "trade protectionism" which refers to protect their countries by squeezing out other countries. Subject to capital control, the media is mainly controlled in the hands of monopoly capital. Powerful capital is used as a backing to set up super-large media conglomerates to monopolize the main part of the mass media, and intervene in the public media through the parliamentary caucus or extra-institutional activity groups. Hence, these news media injects their ideologies and values into the news discourses.

4.3.2 Explanation from Political Perspective

The Guardian is the most serious, credible, and independent news agency in the Britain. Although independent media can avoid the control of the government and political parties, it is difficult to escape the capital monopoly. The so-called "independent newspapers" actually refer to private media, whose ownership and capital are independent of the government and political parties. Under capitalism, market competition has led to the privatization of the media, which demonstrates the hypocrisy of British media. Although the British media advocates objectivity and fairness, pursuing facts and truth. However, many cases prove that the "facts" they have described are adulterated with personal ideologies and values.

The United Kingdom is vigilant and guarded against the Chinese "Belt and Road" initiative and believes that the China proposes this strategy for colonial expansion. Although Britain's participation in the AIIB demonstrates its recognition of the opportunities offered by the BRI. However, the United Kingdom has strongly discriminated against China. They mistook China's prosperity for a threat to their security. Britain's international status has been greatly impaired, especially after the Brexit, without the support of EU. On the one hand, UK wants to establish a cooperative relationship with China. On the other hand, it worries that the growing power of China in the international world will undermine its status. Therefore, the British media deliberately tarnishes and distort China's BRI through public opinion under the influence of hidden ideologies. Under such circumstances, the media would by no means pursue truth, objectivity and impartiality.

5. CONCLUSION

Under the guidance of Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, this thesis applies the corpus-based approach into making a contrastive study of news discourses from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. A small-scale corpus is established by collecting the news reports concerning the BRI in a fixed time from *the Guardian* and *Xinhua Daily*. After the detailed analysis of these texts, the major findings are explicated as follows:

a) The Chinese media focus on presenting the feasibility of this project, the benefits this initiative can bring to countries along the border and stressing its sheer purpose of promoting win-win cooperation. On the contrary, the British news reports are not objective at all. They hold prejudices against this initiative by implying that China advances the Belt and Road Initiative for sake of hegemony and colonialism.

b) Text, discourse practice and social practice are interacted with each other. By using some linguistic devices like word choice, transitivity, modality and intertextuality in the texts, *the Guardian* misleads readers and shapes a negative image of BRI.

c) News reports are vehicles of conveying hidden ideologies of writers, thus readers should grasp the truth of news accounts with critical thinking.

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