

Positive Discourse Analysis of Xi Jinping's Speech at the National University of Singapore under Appraisal Theory

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Abstract—Positive discourse analysis on leaders' speeches has gained much attention from many scholars at home and abroad. However, the author finds that there is few related research on Chinese leaders' speech. Therefore, the paper chooses President Xi Jinping's speech, delivered at the National University of Singapore on November 7th, 2015, as the research subject and conducts the positive discourse analysis from three aspects: attitude system, engagement system and graduation system. After the analysis, the author comes to find that there are more positive resources in Mr. Xi's speech in order to construct a harmonious relationship with his listeners; Mr. Xi is careful to introduce other voices in terms of the engagement system; he adopts more up-scaling force than the down-scaling force, more sharpened force than softened force in terms of the graduation system. The present paper is significant in applying positive discourse analysis to Chinese leader's speech, thus expanding its application scope; in enriching the research content of appraisal theory; and in opening up a new angle for future study.

Index Terms—positive discourse analysis, appraisal theory, President Xi's speech

I. INTRODUCTION

Leaders' speech has been an important research topic for discourse analysis, especially from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA). J. R. Martin has put forward a new angle for discourse analysis, that is, positive discourse analysis (PDA) and appraisal theory serves as its theoretical basis. Due to its gentle, constructive and harmonious way of analysis, PDA has gained great interest from scholars at home and abroad. However, there are few research studying Chinese leaders' speech nowadays. Therefore, the author chooses President Xi's speech delivered at the National University of Singapore on November 7th, 2015 as the research subject and conduct the PDA of it on the basis of appraisal theory. It needs to be pointed out that the author chooses to analyze the English version of Xi's speech, since his audience understands him through the version of English translation. Thus, it is meaningful to explore how the speech of English version achieves interpersonal negotiation between the speaker and his listeners. The author will first introduce the previous studies on PDA and then explain its theoretical framework appraisal system. After that, Xi's speech will be analyzed from three aspects respectively, that is, attitude system, engagement system and graduation system. Finally, the author will present the major findings of this study and its limitations at the end of the paper.

II. POSITIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As a new perspective for discourse analysis, PDA, put forward by J. R. Martin, emphasizes the function of discourse construction and wants to build a better world. It is of great significance in the development of discourse analysis from CDA to PDA. Discourse analysis changes from being deconstructive to being constructive. PDA is not a complete denial of CDA in terms of the theoretical basis and analytic methods but a supplement and development to it. Since its recommendation, it has attracted many domestic and foreign researchers.

J. R. Martin recommended PDA in his paper titled *Positive Discourse Analysis: Solidarity and Change* at the international seminar in Birmingham. He claims that the object of linguistic analysis should not only contain unequal bad news, but also welcome peaceful good news.

The research on PDA started relatively late in China but it has been studied within different genres, such as public speeches, news, etc. Zhu Yongsheng (2006) explains that PDA advocates a positive attitude to the solution of social contradictions and expects to build a harmonious community by discourse analysis. Yuan Lijuan and Zhang Faxiang (2011) conduct an analysis of Obama's speech on the end of combat mission in Iraq from the perspective of PDA.

Nowadays, the theoretical exploration of PDA is still under development and it needs further improvement and perfection. Since PDA is characterized with gentle appraisal attitude, positive and constructive analysis, it will necessarily raise interest from more and more scholars.

III. APPRAISAL THEORY

Appraisal theory is the theoretical framework of PDA. Martin (2004) defined appraisal theory as evaluation,

negotiations of attitude, intensity of emotion and alliance with readers. Readers should not only pay attention to literal meaning but also focus more on deeper meaning of the discourse. Evaluation is also a system of interpersonal meaning. People use evaluative resources to negotiate social relations with other people by telling listeners and readers their feelings and viewpoints towards other people and things (Liu, 2010). Therefore, evaluation is firstly involved with someone's attitude towards events, other people's actions and the surrounding objects. And then it is concerned with the source of attitude, which may not be the speaker himself, but narrated by others. Thirdly, it relates to the degree of intensity of attitudes, which is high, medium or low. The three aspects are named attitude, engagement and graduation respectively.

A. Attitude System

Attitude is the core of appraisal system, which refers to the inter-subjective evaluation of participants and process by reference to a value system with emotional reaction and cultural restriction. In attitude system, language resources explain the emotion of language users towards behavior, text and phenomenon and make use of lexical resources to judge behavior and appreciate the value of things. Therefore, attitude can be divided into affect, judgment and appreciation, which belong to the category of psychology, ethics and aesthetics.

Affect refers to various emotions of language users toward certain people or things according to the standard of individual preference. It is concerned with positive or negative feelings of people: un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction. It is usually realized by mental process or attributive relational process, and judgment and appreciation derive from affect system.

Judgment refers to the opinions of language users on the basis of social norms, which is concerned with people's attitude to behavior, such as admire/criticize, praise/condemn, etc. In judgment system, adverbs usually act as the circumstance of manner, adjectives as epithet or attribute, and some nouns and verbs containing attitudinal meaning also express the meaning of judgment. In the sub-system of judgment, there are social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem judges people's character or behavior from the perspective of normality, capacity, and tenacity. It is concerned with compliment and criticism, generally without legal sense. Social sanction judges people from the perspective of veracity and propriety, that is to say, whether a person is honest or his/her behavior is appropriate. It is involved in commendation and condemnation, usually with legal sense.

Appreciation refers to views of language users toward certain people, things and behavior according to aesthetic standards, which is an assessment of phenomenon. Different from judgment, appreciation focuses on inanimate objects, mainly for product and process. White defined appreciation as the affirmative or negative evaluation of material, artwork, process, and the state of affairs, not the assessment of people's behavior. It can be divided into three subsystems: reaction (whether they catch our attention or please us), composition (balance and complexity), and valuation (how innovative, authentic, timely). Respectively, reaction corresponds to affection, composition to perception, and valuation to cognition, which is equivalent to the interpersonal meaning, textual meaning, and conceptual meaning.

B. Engagement System

Engagement is the language resource indicating voices of the author and texts, which is divided into monogloss and heterogloss. Monogloss states the author's thoughts, opinions and attitudes, which seems to provide only one standpoint and does not admit the possibilities of other voices in public. Heterogloss intends to make use of others' voices to express their own views indirectly, showing that there may exist other opinions. Heterogloss can be divided into two categories. If the words restrict and keep away from the existence of another position and voice, it belongs to dialogic contraction. If not, it is the dialogic expansion and it provides space for the difference of speaker's viewpoints and standpoints.

Dialogic contraction consists of disclaim and proclaim. Disclaim is a direct refusal or substitution of a comment, while proclaim is to query, refute, subvert or reject an opinion by altering, emphasizing or intervening. Disclaim is composed of deny and counter. Deny is a method to lead positive views into dialogue, which is not a simple negation of affirmation in logical relations. Sometimes when the author indicates that he holds different opinions with the third party, the denial expressions point to the relationship beyond the speaker and reader. In fact, the author aims to draw the readers to his/her side, align with him/her as well as oppose the third party. Sometimes, deny points to the assumed reader, especially when the speaker or writer postulates that this kind of thought may have an impact on a portion of audience. Counter is intended to use one proposition to replace or oppose another, which may probably occur in this place. Proclaim is composed of concur, pronounce and endorsement. Concur is the speaker showing his agreement with opinions of his conversational partner publicly. When someone emphasizes, intervenes or alters certain ideas obviously, it is the pronounce. When speakers describe some outside opinions as correct, effective, undeniable or entirely valid, this kind of proclaim is endorsement. Entertain and attribute belong to dialogic expansion. Entertain indicates that the relevant standpoint is a possible standpoint, usually expressed by modal auxiliaries. There are two subclasses of attribute, acknowledge and distance. Acknowledge is a neutral attribute, which doesn't demonstrate the views of the speaker on certain proposition overtly. Distance makes it clear that there is a distance between the speaker and the quotative proposition and he distinguishes himself from the proposition distinctly.

C. Graduation System

Graduation runs through the entire attitude system and has a place in engagement system as well, which shows different levels of evaluation meaning. The most significant character of attitudinal meaning is gradability. Affect, judgment and appreciation are all concerned with affirmation and negation with varying degrees. Graduation has two axis, intensification or quantification as well as typicality or definiteness. The former is called the force and the latter is the focus. Force involves two aspects, intensity and quantity, which was defined respectively as intensification and quantification by Martin. Intensification is the judgment for intensity, which mainly concerns quality and process. While quantity, namely quantification, is applied to entity. Proceeding from mode, three kinds of intensification are distinguished, isolation, infusion and repetition. Quantification is concerned with entity, which includes both concrete and abstract ones. Quantified system is the imprecise evaluation of lexical resources in number, mass and extent. Extent includes time and space, which can be evaluated from two aspects, distance and span. Based on the moving direction of graduation, focus can be divided into two categories, sharpen and soften. Sharpen indicates that the author intends to maximize the value position, whether it is positive or negative, so as to draw the reader to his side, and regard them as his allies. Effect of soften depends on the words of focus. If the word is negative, its function is to soften the value position of the speaker or author, which is a placatory method so that it can bring into correspondence with readers holding different opinions. If the word is positive, its effect is difficult to determine. Generally speaking, the positive evaluation has a potential destructive role in writer or reader, so that is why soften is needed.

By analyzing Xi's speech in National University of Singapore from the perspective of PDA under the guideline of appraisal theory, the present paper aims to discover how our chairman Xi comes to achieve his goal of making foreigners know better about China and encouraging them to contribute to the peaceful development of Asia.

IV. POSITIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF XI'S SPEECH

The author has introduced the PDA and its theoretical basis appraisal theory above. In this part, Xi's speech will be analyzed from the perspective of PDA under the guide of appraisal theory. In Xi's speech, he intends to create a harmonious and peaceful environment for the development of both China and all its neighbors, and promote deeper relation between China and Singapore. Therefore, there will be lots of positive discourse resources in his speech. In all, there are 186 appraisal resources in Xi's speech delivered in the National University of Singapore. The general distribution of appraisal resources is presented in the following figure.

TABLE 1
APPRAISAL RESOURCES IN XI'S SPEECH

	Attitude	Engagement	Graduation
Number	112	37	37
Percentage	60.2%	19.9%	19.9%

As it is shown in the above figure, attitude resources are the most, accounting for 60.2%, while engagement and graduate resources are of the same proportion for 19.9%. Therefore, attitude system is the core of appraisal system, and Xi uses lots of attitude resources to express his affect, judgment and appreciation so as to build a close relation with his listeners. Engagement system is concerned with the source of attitude and graduation system relates to the degree of intensity of attitudes. The two systems go through all the attitude system to achieve the speaker's interpersonal meaning. Then the paper will analyze Xi's speech from attitude, engagement and graduation system respectively.

A. PDA of Xi's Speech in Attitude System

After statistics and analysis, there are 112 attitude resources, the distribution of which is shown in table 2. In his speech, Mr. Xi employs various attitude resources to express his emotion, achieve his interpersonal meaning, and construct a positive relation with his listeners.

TABLE 2
ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN XI'S SPEECH

	Affect	Judgment	Appreciation
Number	14	46	52
Percentage	12.5%	41.1%	46.4%

There are 14 affect resources, accounting for the least proportion of 12.5%. Mr. Xi uses many affect resources at the beginning of his speech to express his happiness to be there as well as his thanks to his listeners and try to create a close relation with his listeners. Besides, it finds that Mr. Xi tends to use positive and direct words or expressions to show his emotion. There are some examples below.

(1) I am **delighted** (affect+) to come to the National University of Singapore and talk to you as a guest speaker of Singapore Lecture.

(2) It gives me great **pleasure** (affect+) to pay a state visit to the garden state of Singapore at the invitation of President Tan Keng Yam.

(3) We would like to express our **sincere congratulations** (affect+) to the Singaporean people on their success

There are 46 judgment resources in the speech, accounting for 41.1%. Specifically, there are more social esteem resources than social sanction resources. Social sanction resources are mainly used when Mr. Xi talks about serious issues, such as China's attitude on the South China Sea. Social sanction is of legal sense and is more serious. Therefore, it is used cautiously in the speech. On the other hand, Mr. Xi uses some social esteem resources to praise Singaporean people for their capacity and tenacity. Also, he uses some resources to demonstrate China has gone through a lot suffering and finally succeeds in making great achievements. Although judgment resources are usually used to describe people, it can be used to judge what a nation has done in author's opinion, because to some extent a nation can be viewed as Mother of its people. The author finds that nearly all of judgment resources are positive in Xi's speech, no matter it is social sanction resources or social esteem resources. Mr. Xi successfully achieves his interpersonal meaning, constructs a positive relation between himself and his listeners, and tries to inspire the listeners to devote themselves to the cause of building a peaceful and prosperous Asia through these judgment resources. Below are some examples of judgment resources.

(4) Indeed, NUS has produced a galaxy of talents and **outstanding** (judgment: capacity) public leaders for Singapore.

(5) In the last 50 years, the **hard-working** (judgment: tenacity) and **visionary** (judgment: capacity) people of Singapore have **endured** (judgment: tenacity) hardships and **succeeded** (judgment: tenacity) in building Singapore into one of the most advanced countries in Asia.

(6) It is the **bounden duty** (judgment: propriety) of the Chinese government to uphold China's **territorial sovereignty** (judgment: propriety) and **legitimate maritime rights and interests** (judgment: propriety).

There are 52 appreciation resources in Xi's speech, accounting for the biggest proportion of 46.4%. Appreciation refers to views of language users toward certain people, things and behavior according to aesthetic standards. With these appreciation resources, Mr. Xi expresses his views about Singapore, the National University of Singapore, the relation between China and Singapore, etc. At the outset he compliments NUS and the achievement made by Singapore. Later he appreciates China's close bond with Singapore and ASEAN from former history until today. Mr. Xi employs many active words to define China's relation with Singapore, such as friendly, fruitful, harmonious, cooperative, shared, common, and so on. Mr. Xi aims to tell Singaporean youths of our friendly relationship since 25 years ago and call for them to continue this close relation in the future. In addition, some appreciation resources are used when Mr. Xi introduces his initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. By doing so, he hopes to make his listeners know better about the initiative and attract Singapore to join in it. As it can be seen, appreciation resources can be employed to achieve the speaker's interpersonal meaning and achieve constructive meaning. Here are some examples of appreciation resources.

(7) This year marks the **25th anniversary** (appreciation) of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Singapore, and it gives me great pleasure to pay a state visit to the **garden state** (appreciation) of Singapore at the invitation of President Tan Keng Yam.

(8) With a history of **110 years** (appreciation), the National University of Singapore is **renowned** (appreciation) both in Asia and internationally.

(9) China and Singapore are **friendly** (appreciation) neighbors across the sea with **a long history** (appreciation) of **amicable exchanges** (appreciation).

(10) The Belt and Road Initiative, as it is now called, is about **openness** (appreciation), **development** (appreciation) and **cooperation** (appreciation).

B. PDA of Xi's Speech in Engagement System

In engagement system, there are a few monogloss resources in the speech which are used to express the speaker's voice. Because of its subjectivity, the speaker uses less of it. Besides, the speaker tends to use "we" to get close with his audiences and make alliance with them. However, there are more heterogloss resources in the speech with its abundant interpersonal meanings, which would give enlightenment of constructing the text. The speaker employs dialogic contraction and expansion alternatively in order to bring in other voices to make his opinions objective and achieve inter-subjective negotiation. The analysis of the speech finds that the resources of dialogue contraction are a little richer than dialogue expansion, for the speaker restricts other voices and standpoints and he intends to persuade his audiences and provide his voices with authority by dialogic contraction. The statistical result of engagement resources is presented in table 3.

TABLE 3
ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES IN XI'S SPEECH

	Monogloss	Heterogloss	
		Contract	Expand
Number	3	19	15
Percentage	8.1%	51.4%	40.5%

There are some examples here to show the engagement resources in the speech.

(11) **This saying vividly reflects** (contract: endorse) the spirit of Singapore, and we would like to express our sincere congratulations to the Singaporean people on their success.

(12) Efforts to reach this goal should **naturally** (contract: concur) start in its neighborhood.

(13) **There has never been** any problem with the freedom of navigation and overflight; **nor will there** ever be any in the future. (contract: deny)

(14) **Yet** (contract: counter), the region also faces a host of intricate security issues, particularly the rising non-traditional challenges...

(15) **As a Chinese saying goes** (expand: attribute), a single line of silk doesn't make a thread, and one hand cannot clap.

(16) **We should** form synergy between our respective development strategies. (monogloss)

C. PDA of Xi's Speech in Graduation System

As it is shown in the following figure, the force resources are in the majority among the graduation system and all of them are up-scalding. Among the less focus resources, sharpened focus is richer than softened focus.

TABLE 4
GRADUATION RESOURCES IN XI'S SPEECH

	Force		Focus	
	Raise	Lower	Sharpen	Soften
Number	26	0	7	4
Percentage	70.3%	0	18.9%	10.8%

In his speech, Mr. Xi adopts raising force and sharpened focus to highlight his attitude and proper engagement. Mr. Xi employs intensifiers, attitudinal lexis, metaphor, and repetition to raise his force of attitude. He also uses a plenty of number resources to show the objectivity of his speech. Below are some examples of graduation resources in the speech.

(17) **Indeed**, NUS has produced **a galaxy of** talents and outstanding public leaders for Singapore. (force: raise)\

(18) China is now Singapore's **biggest** trading partner, and Singapore is the **biggest** source of foreign investment and an important investment destination for China. (force: raise)

(19)China has the **unshirkable** responsibility to ensure peace. (force: raise)

(20) China shares close cultural bonds with **all countries** in Southeast Asia. (focus: sharpen)

(21)At present, the most important task facing **all Asian governments** is to ensure robust and sustained development. (focus: sharpen)

(22)For **nearly** half a century, the Southeast Asian countries have addressed instability and underdevelopment and achieved stability and development... (focus: soften)

V. CONCLUSION

It is believed that PDA can do better in advocating positive social ideology and improving the social life for it aims at the active construction and peaceful solution to the problems. After the positive analysis of Xi's speech, the author can draw the following conclusions.

Firstly, there are more positive and direct resources than the negative and implicit ones in the attitude system. In the speech, Mr. Xi employs lots of positive and direct affects, judgments, and appreciations to express his excitement for being there, judge Singaporean achievements and efforts, and appreciate their relation. From the perspective of PDA, all of these can easily seize the hearts of the youth and evoke their emotional resonance.

Secondly, in the engagement system, Mr. Xi is also careful to introduce the other voices and stances, establishing the dialogue with his audience, thus effectively expanding or contracting the dialogic space. The speaker tends to limit the dialogue in order to convey to the audience an authoritative and inarguable tone of Chinese Government and its people, that's "peace" and "development".

Thirdly, in the graduation system, the speaker adopts more up-scaling force than the down-scaling force, more sharpened focus than softened focus. In the speech, Mr. Xi employs the raising or sharpened resources to highlight his strong attitude. From the perspective of PDA, this kind of feature of graduation indicates his wish to lay a solid foundation for the comprehensive and profound cooperation. The finding suggests that the addresser makes good use of graduation resources to amplify the value position and hence strongly align the addressees into that value position.

Finally, it can be seen that President Xi devotes to promoting China's cooperation with Singapore. He is ready to handle the dispute and conflict, based on mutual respect and the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving difference, continuously enriching the strategic partnership and paving a win-win road of the equality and mutual trust. The speech conveys the positive signals, such as friendship, respect, cooperation as well as peaceful development, which benefits the people of all the countries.

This paper is just a tentative application of appraisal theory. Due to her limited knowledge of appraisal theory and PDA, the author is aware that there exists much weakness in her paper and she welcomes suggestions and corrections. Besides, the author just conducts an overall appraisal analysis of the speech due to the limited space. It can be continued from deeper aspects. For example, the distribution of appraisal resources can be analyzed from the beginning, body and closing part of the speech, and we can discuss their functions in each part.

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