China's National Image in the *Philippine Star's* Reports on the Belt and Road Initiative: A Discourse Analysis Based on Attitudinal Resources

Yuqin Kang[1]

Abstract:

Based on attitudinal resources, this paper conducts a positive discourse analysis of news reports in *the Philippine Star* on the BRI and explores both the Philippines' attitude toward China's BRI and the shaping of China's national image by *the Philippine Star*. The study shows that *the Philippine Star* mainly uses the attitudinal resources of appreciation and judgment, with mainly positive attitudes, to portray China as a responsible world power committed to peaceful cooperation, coordinated development, and mutual benefit. In general, the Philippines supports and approves the BRI and is full of hope and expectation for related cooperation, but at the same time, it raises doubts about the goals of China's BRI and is concerned about China's excessive power. The current study intends to present China's national image shaped by the Philippines through exploring the attitudinal resources used in the news reports about the BRI in *the Philippine Star*, to offer some personal suggestions for the improvement and dissemination of a positive Chinese national image in the Philippines, and to provide references for further development and implementation of the BRI in the Philippines.

Keywords: attitudinal resources; the BRI; China's national image; *the Philippine Star*

1. Introduction

National image is an important part of national influence and a business card for diplomacy between countries. It is of great practical significance not only to promote international exchanges and cooperation but also to enhance comprehensive national power. The construction of national image consists of two aspects: national images shaped by oneself and by other countries. Research on China's national image constructed by other countries can truly reflect the country's perception and evaluation of China and thus reveal the values and political ideology behind it. The Belt and Road Initiative (hereafter BRI) refers to the cooperative initiative to build the "New Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", which were proposed by President Xi Jinping in September and October 2013, respectively. Since its launch, the BRI has received widespread attention and positive responses from the international community. However, some countries have portrayed the BRI as China's political means of expansion under the disguise of cooperation. Therefore, China's national image, constructed by the media against the background of the BRI, has gradually become a research hotspot. The public's and government's perceptions and evaluations of the BRI are reflected in China's national image shaped by the media against this background.

Located across the sea from China, the Philippines has been trading with China since more than a thousand years ago and has had a close relationship with China since ancient times. The development of China-Philippines relations after World War II has roughly gone through three periods: the period of stalemate in the 1940s; the period of détente, the establishment of diplomatic relations, and development from the 1960s to the 1990s; and the golden period of China-Philippines relations in the 21st century (Dai & Jin, 2009).

---

[1] University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Address: China, Chengdu, Corresponding author: Jun Chu
E-mail address: jun.chu@126.com Telephone: +86 18982299830

The proposal and implementation of the BRI have brought China-Philippines relations to new heights and further strengthened exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. The Philippines missed "the first train" of the BRI due to the foreign policy of Aquino III, who united the USA against China.

In October 2016, President Duterte, who pursued a diplomatic policy of independence, made a successful visit to China. The Philippines and China signed agreements aimed at strengthening trade, investment, and economic cooperation; carrying out production capacity cooperation and investment cooperation; and conducting action plans for agricultural cooperation. The concepts of "practical cooperation, mutual benefit, and win-win" have functioned as a solid bridge between the BRI and *AmBisyon Natin 2040* (Huang, 2018). After taking office, President Duterte expressed his willingness to resolve differences through a peaceful and friendly attitude and through consultation and dialogue; thus, the South China Sea issue since the 1970s is no longer an obstacle to further exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. The Philippines is one of the main cooperative countries in the BRI; meanwhile, the BRI brings the two countries closer together. As one of the founding countries of ASEAN, the Philippines' attitude toward China's BRI and toward China will influence the entire ASEAN's understanding and judgment of the BRI and China. The Philippines is not only an important factor affecting China's route but also a crucial part of the implementation and development of the BRI in ASEAN and a key element in the strategic layout of both China and the United States. Thus, its strategic position is very prominent for China (Li, 2016). How the Philippine media shapes China in the context of the BRI plays a salient role in the implementation of China's national strategy—the BRI. Using attitudinal resources as a theoretical basis to conduct a positive discourse analysis of the *Philippine Star*'s news articles on the BRI and to explore its construction of China's national image is conducive to China's further in-depth understanding of the Philippine public and official attitudes toward the BRI. This will help China to know itself and other countries so as to effectively carry out follow-up cooperation.

2. Literature Review

Kenneth Ewart Boulding formally introduced the concept of "national image" in 1959. Boulding (1959: 121) argues that national image is a synthesis of a country's perception of itself and other countries' perceptions of it, based on the input and output of various information. In China, research on national image roughly began in the 1990s. Scholars gave different definitions of "national image". Xu Xiaoge (1996: 36) considers the national image to be the image presented by other countries' news media through news reports and speeches. Guan Wenhu (1999) asserts that national image is a comprehensive recognition and assessment by the external and internal publics of the country's actions and achievements. Zhang Kun and Xu Qiong (2007) believe that national image is a reflection of national strength, and the more favorable a country's national image is, the stronger its strength is. Wu Xianju and Zhang Kun (2016) view national image as a mutually constructed relationship between the country and other countries in the process of interaction. There is no unified definition of "national image" in the world. Scholars have interpreted "national image" from different perspectives, and from their explanations, it is possible to know that national image has diverse functions, such as political function, diplomatic function, and commercial function (Sun, 2002), so the study of national image has important practical significance for both the country and society.

Research on shaping China's national image by other countries has changed from the initial focus on the mainstream media of developed countries such as the UK and the US to the trend of focusing on the shaping of China's national image by the media of third-world countries. However, in general, research on this line doesn't pay enough attention to developing countries, especially how Philippine media constructed China's national image.

The existing research on China's national image shaped by Philippine news media is generally limited. Since the topic primarily concerns China's national image, the scholars who are interested in it are mainly Chinese. Fang Yonghua (2006) investigates the *Manila Bulletin*'s attitudes toward China from the perspective of national relations. Wang Leping (2015) analyzes China's national image shaped by *The Manila Times*—China as an ideological opponent in the eyes of the Philippines, a neighbor with military threats and conflicting interests, but also as an economic and trade partner. The communication analysis by Ye Qing (2014) reveals that there is 90 percent negative framing in China-related news reported by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, which focuses on the South China Sea issue as well as China's domestic social issues. Wu and Yue (2021) argue that China's national image presented by the *Manila Bulletin* has experienced diachronic changes with political alterations. The existing studies on China's national image shaped by the Philippine media are mostly from the perspective of communication and national relations and mainly center on the South China Sea issue and the social problems of China, with limited attention on China's positive contribution to the world.

The BRI is one of China's wisdoms and a Chinese solution for the world to move toward a win-win situation, but the majority of studies on China's national image portrayed in the news about the BRI only take it as one of the reporting topics but do not describe and analyze it in detail, and the amount of such analysis under the guidance of linguistics is limited.

In addition, starting from such a positive topic, it can more objectively reflect the attitude of the Philippines toward China. This can help reflect the Philippine public's opinion toward the BIR and China and provide references for a targeted improvement plan as well as for the development and implementation of national follow-up strategies.

3. Appraisal Theory and Research Design

3.1 Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theory is a complement to and development of Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar by James Robert Martin. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that language has three main metafunctions: ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function, of which the interpersonal function is realized through mood, modality, etc., to reveal the closeness of interpersonal relationships. However, interpersonal function lacks attention to the viewpoint and stance of the speaker (hearer).

Recognizing the neglect of semantic evaluation by Systemic-Functional Grammar, Martin proposed appraisal theory in the 1990s and gradually built up a complete theoretical framework. The appraisal theory mainly investigates the attitude, emotions, value judgments, and stance of the author or speaker by analyzing the evaluative words in the sentence. It not only explores the literal meaning of discourse but also focuses on the various meanings implied by the attitudes conveyed in the discourse (Martin, 2000). The appraisal theory consists of three subsystems: attitude, engagement, and graduation, of which the attitude system is the center of the appraisal theory and the theory applied in this paper. Attitude is a psychologically influenced judgment and appreciation of human behavior, texts, processes, and phenomena (Wang, 2001). Attitude concerns the values by which people evaluate human behavior and objects and associate emotional/affectual responses with participants and processes. 'Attitude' has three subsystems of its own: AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION (Martin, 2000). Affect is the resource deployed for construing emotional responses ('happiness, sadness, loathing', etc.), and this study investigates all four categories of affect, namely, dis/inclination, un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction (Martin, 2000: 145). Judgment is deployed for construing moral evaluations of behavior ('ethical, deceptive, brave', etc.), and the two subsystems of it are social esteem (including normality, capacity, and tenacity) and social sanction (including veracity and propriety). Appreciation construes the aesthetic quality of semiotic text/process and natural phenomena, and reaction, composition, and valuation are included (Martin, 2000). Reaction has to do with the degree to which the text/process in question captures our attention (reaction: impact) and the emotional impact it has on us (reaction: quality). Composition has to do with our perceptions of proportionality (composition: balance) and detail (composition: complexity) in a text/process. Valuation has to do with our assessment of the social significance of the text/process (Martin, 2000: 160). Attitudinal resources can be both positive and negative.

Positive discourse analysis is developed from and completes critical discourse analysis (Hu, 2012). Guided philosophically by Marxism and linguistically by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar, critical discourse analysis seeks to reveal the relationship between language and ideology. Critical discourse analysis often takes "bad news" as the object of criticism, blaming social conflicts on power and ideology and trying to raise people's sensitivity to discourse manipulation and to lead them to be critical and anti-manipulation (Zhu, 2006). Essentially, its approach to social conflicts is negative and deconstructive. Martin (1999) argues that critical discourse analysis focuses on criticism and deconstruction rather than positive construction and problem solving. At an international symposium on critical discourse in 1999, James Robert Martin presented a paper entitled "Positive Discourse Analysis: Solidarity and Change", which opened the door to positive discourse analysis worldwide. Martin (2000) believes that empirical discourse analysis should be devoted to solving problems, resolving conflicts, guiding people to live positively, and building a harmonious society. He also points out that critical discourse analysis is deconstructive, while positive discourse analysis is constructive. Positive discourse analysis advocates a positive attitude toward social conflicts and contradictions, hoping to build a harmonious society through discourse analysis, which has positive and constructive significance (Huang, Leng, & Gu, 2007).

The BIR is the road to win-win cooperation and the path of peace and friendship. Knowing the stance of the Philippines toward the BRI and China can positively solve the existing problems and promote the implementation of the BRI in the Philippines. In addition, attitudinal resources can more comprehensively reflect the inclinations of the Philippines toward China in news reports.

Therefore, based on the friendly and harmonious model of discourse analysis—the positive discourse analysis—and applying attitudinal resources (Figure 3.1) as the theoretical framework, this paper investigated the discourse patterns and lexical meaning of news reports about the BIR in the *Philippine Star* in an attempt to explore the Philippine media's attitude toward the implementation of the BRI and China's national image shaped by the Philippine media, and then identify the problems in the construction process of the BRI in the Philippines and address them in a targeted manner.
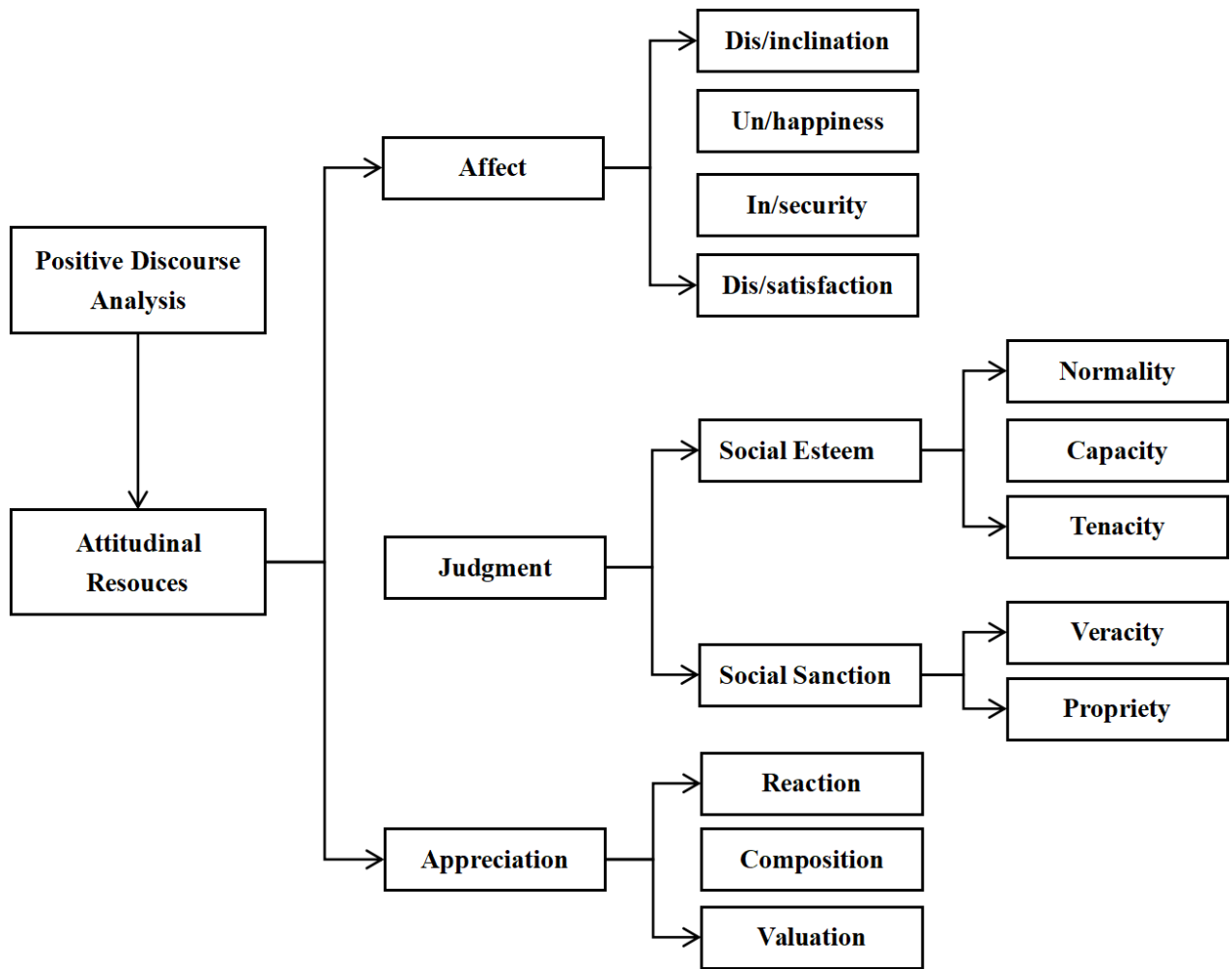

Figure 3.1 The Theoretical Framework

3.2 Research Design

According to the *Philippine Yearbook 2013*, the *Philippine Star* is one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the Philippines, with an average of 266,000 copies per day. Due to its wide readership and strong influence in the Philippines, the news reports about the BRI in the *Philippine Star* are selected as the research material for this study. Under the theoretical guidance of both the positive analysis and attitudinal resources, China's national image constructed by the Philippine media and the attitudes of the Philippines toward the BIR and China are examined in this paper.

This study, based on the LexisNexis Academic database, has retrieved 61 news reports related to the BRI in the *Philippine Star* from 2013 to 2021, with the keywords "one belt, one road" and "silk road". Subsequently, the news with high relevance to the BRI was filtered, excluding those with low relevance, i.e., those that only mentioned the BRI once in the text. And the final number of news reports about BRI in the *Philippine Star* is 14, with a total of 7858 words.

AntConc 4.0.0 is employed to count the word frequencies of the selected news reports (with functional words removed), and then UAM Corpus Tool 6.2 is applied to manually annotate, count, and analyze the attitudinal resources in the corpus to explore the evaluation of and attitudes toward the BRI by the *Philippine Star* and the image of China portrayed in it. More specifically, the present study aims to address the following research questions:

1) What are the attitudinal resources employed in the *Philippine Star*'s news reports about the BRI? How are they distributed?

2) What's the national image of China constructed by the *Philippine Star*?

3) How does the *Philippine Star* use these attitudinal resources to construct China's national image?

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 High Frequency Words

Word frequency is one of the basic tools of corpus-based linguistic study. The current study employed AntConc 4.0.0 to conduct a word frequency analysis of the news reports about the BRI in the *Philippine Star*. The words that appeared more than 15 times are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 High Frequency Words (More than 15 Times)

Word	Word Frequency	Word	Word Frequency
China	141	infrastructure	26
road	97	Asia	23
belt	64	projects	21
Philippines	53	development	20
economic	43	build	19
initiative	41	ASEAN	18
countries	41	south	18
trade	40	international	18
silk	39	Xi	18
Chinese	38	project	18
Duterte	36	other	17
president	33	sea	17
world	29	US	17
Beijing	27	forum	17
new	27		

A general idea of the subject matter and the information in the research material is evident from the high-frequency words. Table 4.1 shows that the words "China", "belt", "road", "initiative", "silk", "Duterte", and "Philippines" are more frequently used than other words, indicating that the research materials are fairly chosen because they are all closely related to the BRI. The BRI is significant in the Philippines' economy, trade, and infrastructure development, as indicated by the high frequency words "economic", "trade", and "infrastructure". The Philippines is also concerned about the BRI's stimulation and development of the Philippine economy. In addition to "Philippines", the words "world", "Asia", "ASEAN", and "Europe" are also more frequently used. According to the Philippine media, China's BRI has an international impact, affecting not just the Philippines but also Europe and Asia. It is worth mentioning that the frequencies of the two words "south" and "sea" are almost the same, which reminds us of the South Sea, as territorial disputes in the South China Sea between the Philippines and China are often discussed when reporting the BRI.

4.2 Attitudinal Resources

To manually annotate the evaluative words in the *Philippine Star*'s news reports regarding the BRI, UAM Corpus Tool 6.2 is used. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 demonstrate the general characteristics of the attitudinal resource distribution.
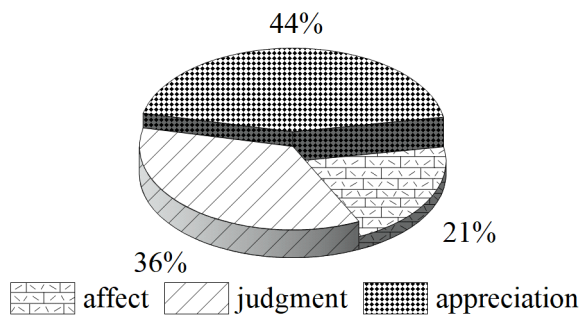

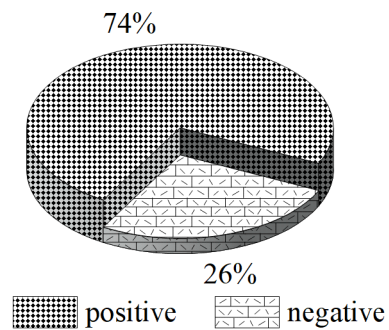Figure 4.2 The Distribution of Attitudinal Resources

Figure 4.3 The Distribution of the Polarity of Attitudinal Resources

A total of 421 evaluative words about the BRI are presented in the corpus. In terms of attitudinal resources, appreciation accounts for 44%, followed by judgment for 36%, and affect for 21%. The greatest contribution comes from appreciation, and the least from affect. As one of the most circulated newspapers in the Philippines, the *Philippine Star* has the characteristics of objectivity; thus, affect, which is deployed for construing emotional resources, is less frequently used. The resources of appreciation and judgment are the semantic expressions and evaluations of the BRI and China in terms of moral evaluations and aesthetic quality. Positive resources (74%) outnumber negative ones (26%), according to the distribution of polarity. This demonstrates that the BRI is widely seen as approved in the Philippine media, and the BRI has helped to shape a generally favorable national image of China throughout the world. The Philippines has confidence in China and is anticipating the further development of the BRI. The utilization and distribution of resources in each subsystem of the attitudinal system will be covered in detail in the following section.

4.2.1 Affect

The *Philippine Star*'s coverage of the BRI demonstrates open-mindedness and inclination toward both the BRI and China, while also expressing doubts and reservations about the purpose of China's BRI. China is generally portrayed in the *Philippine Star* as a welcoming nation, although it can also be menacing at times. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 display the distribution features of the 87 affective resources in total.
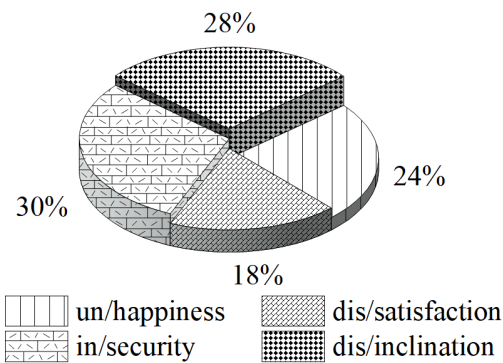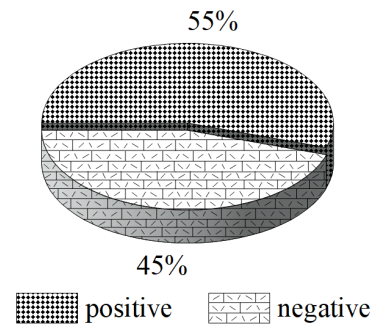
Figure 4.4 The Distribution of Affect

Figure 4.5 The Distribution of the Polarity of Affect

As demonstrated in Figure 4.4, in/security accounts for 30%, dis/inclination for 28%, un/happiness for 24%, and dis/satisfaction for 18%. Figure 4.5 depicts the polarity distribution of affective resources, which is composed of 55% positivity and 45% negativity. The words "welcome", "enjoying", "warmer", and "happy", which are in the set of happiness, together with "satisfaction", which belongs to the set of satisfaction, are used to indicate the Philippines' delight and satisfaction with the economic and trade development brought about by China's BRI. "Expects", "want to", "hope to", and "willing to" all belong to the inclination set, demonstrating that the Philippines has a strong willingness to cooperate with China on the BRI and believes that its participation will be beneficial. It can be noticed that three sets of attitudinal resources are basically positive, while the dis/security set is almost negative. The items like "fear", "warned", "suspicious", "risks", and "doubt" indicate the Philippines' distrust and suspicion of China in that China's BRI has hidden risks influencing the Philippines' national security. As indicated by the attitudinal resources, the *Philippine Star* regards the BRI as China's approach, with opportunities and challenges coexisting to promote international exchanges and cooperation. And the Philippines' attitude is also two-faceted—on the one hand, the desire for the benefits that this brings, and on the other hand, the concerns about the disadvantages that it brings.The following are some instances of how the affective resources in different sets are used.

(1) The government wants to explore opportunities that would enable it to integrate its "Build Build Build" infrastructure buildup program with China's BRI, according to the Department of Finance (DOF).

The affective resource in the inclination set "wants to" in example 1 reflects the stance of the Philippine officials toward the BRI, as represented by the Secretary of Finance of the Philippines. To seek better development opportunities, the Philippines is inclined to dovetail its domestic development plans with China's BRI. The BRI is acknowledged and anticipated in the Philippines, as is evident.

(2) "In other words, buying more products from us which is definitely a welcome move from our Chinese counterparts," the trade secretary added. "The Chinese are now more friendly toward Philippine products."

In example 2, the words "welcome" and "friendly" are semantic resources in the happiness set that inform the readers of the Philippines' favorable attitude toward China's promotion of Philippine trade as well as its acknowledgement of China's friendliness to the Philippines in trade.

(3) It cited more livelihood projects out of mutually beneficial infrastructure cooperation projects with the Philippines within the framework of the BRI and the Build Build Build plan, "aiming to instill a greater sense of fulfillment and satisfaction among our peoples."

Example 3 is a strong counterattack by the Chinese Embassy in Manila when facing America's accusations of ecological and environmental damage in the execution of the BRI. The aims of China's BRI are to pay attention to people's livelihoods, enhance the quality of life of people in the relevant nations, and enable people to live happy lives, as demonstrated by "fulfillment" and "satisfaction", which are parts of the satisfaction set.

(4) In some places, Beijing is suffering a political backlash due to fears of domination by Asia's biggest economy.

The *Philippine Star*'s coverage of China's BRI includes Example 4. According to the *Philippine Star*, China was going through some political regression as it implemented the BRI, with relevant countries' fears of being dominated by China, which is Asia's largest economy. The affective resource "fear" in the insecurity set suggests that some countries, including the Philippines, are wary of China's power and remain skeptical of the true purpose of China's BRI.

4.2.2 Judgment

Through the use of judgment resources, the *Philippine Star*, with the related news reports, displays its approval and support for China's BRI in that the initiative targets establishing mutually beneficial economic partnerships with the Philippines. And a competent and trustworthy image of China is created. The distribution characteristics of all 87 judgment resources are shown in Figures 4.6 and 4.7.
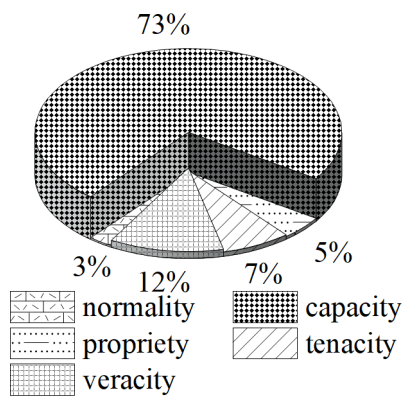
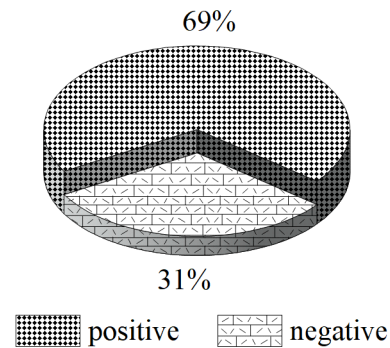

Figure 4.6 The Distribution of Judgment   *Figure 4.7 The Distribution of the Polarity of Judgment*

The distribution of the judgment resources employed in the *Philippine Star*'s coverage of the BRI is shown in Figure 4.6, with accounting capacity for 73%, veracity for 12%, tenacity for 7%, propriety for 5%, and normality for 3%. According to Figure 4.7, 69% of the judgment resources are positive, and 31% are negative. The judgment resources used by the *Philippine Stars* suggest that China's capability to promote the continuous improvement of the Philippine economic base and infrastructure construction is recognized; however, this competence is also questioned and worried about. While the Philippines is cognizant of the benefits brought about by the BRI, it is also aware of the numerous challenges associated with its implementation. Both the Philippine media's attitude toward the BRI and China's national image shaped by it are multidimensional, with positive and negative aspects intertwined while the positive side dominates.

Positive words expressing capability such as "develop", "benefit", "enhance", "help", "improve", "promote", and "boost", etc., accurately depict China's strong support and spontaneous help for its partners, with the Philippines included, which is consistent with the goals of the BRI. The BRI is a grand economic vision of open cooperation among the countries participating in the project, and China joins hands with all countries to work together toward the goal of mutual benefit and common security.

(5) He further stressed that it would open new markets for Philippine products, as the initiative would promote free trade and connect economies across Asia and Europe. "We think that the Philippines will definitely benefit in participating in the One Belt, One Road project, particularly the maritime silk road section of that project," Dominguez said.

Example 5 is a public statement on the BRI made by Philippine Secretary of Finance Carlos Domnguez in the *Philippine Star*. The Philippine government believes that China is capable of putting the BRI into action and achieving its goals of bringing benefits to its partners and creating a community of interests, as indicated by the words "promote" and "benefit", which belong to capability.

However, the presence of negative capacities such as "threaten", "displaced", "break", etc., reflects the Philippines' concern about China's excessive involvement in its political and economic construction of the Philippines, as well as the Philippines worries about China's overwhelming competence.

(6) "Through fear and coercion, Beijing is working to expand its form of communist-socialist ideology in order to bend, break, and replace the existing rules-based international order and prevent a free and open Indo-Pacific," Davidson said.

Example 6 is the opinion of the Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command on China as reported in the *Philippine Star*. The negative capabilities "bend", "break", and "replace", show that the Philippines is worried about China's ideological export and control of the Philippines through the implementation of the BRI, which may change the status quo in the Philippines. Even though this is said by the Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command about the BRI, it still represents a kind of view of the BRI in the Philippines. In addition, combined with the analysis of high-frequency words in Section 4.1, where "US" appears more than 15 times, it can be seen that the United States attempts to interfere with the implementation of China's BRI in the Philippines and to smear China by distorting China's national image in the Philippines.

In terms of tenacity such as "support", "sustainably", "joint effort", etc., the Philippines expresses its support and preference for the implementation and development of China's BRI. The Philippines realizes that China is the tower of strength in promoting sustainable economic growth for the BRI participants and relevant economic partners. The tenacity of judgment resources used in the *Philippine Star* constructed a far-sighted, tenacious, determined, and courageous image of China, which takes full responsibility for supporting the successive programs and projects in the Philippines and calls for joint efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind in the right way to solve the problems of today's world.

(7) In his opening remarks, Xi called for joint efforts to build the Belt and Road into an avenue for peace, prosperity, innovation, progress and civilization.

Example 7 is taken from the *Philippine Star*'s coverage of General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech at the opening ceremony of the BRI. As Xi mentioned, the BRI upholds the spirit of peace, cooperation, mutual learning, and mutual benefit, and countries should hold hands together to build the Belt and Road.

Indicated by the judgment resources of normality, veracity, and propriety employed in the *Philippine Star*, an overall negative image of China is shaped. China is depicted as a hypocritical country that destroys the international order, disregards the ecological environment, and pursues economic interests under the guise of the BRI for its political and economic expansion. The normality resources—"disregard", "illegal", and "abuse"—imply the negative evaluation of the Philippines toward China's non-compliance with the rules and norms in some aspects. The Philippines believes that China and the BRI are untrue and unreliable, behind which lies China's conspiracy of "expansion".

(8) ... the US said China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the largest source of marine debris, the worst perpetrators of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the world's largest consumer of trafficked wildlife and timber products.

The view of the United States on China's BRI, as reported in the *Philippine Star*, is shown in Example 8. As an item of negative normality, "illegal" demonstrates the unfriendly attitude of the United States toward China and its utterly negative stance on the BRI. "Illegal" has shaped China as a perpetrator that does whatever it takes to get what it wants and that damages the international ecological environment only for its own interests. Similar statements by the U.S. in the *Philippine Star* will also influence the Philippine public to shift their opinions about China and the BRI in a similar way to America's.

(9) No Chinese invasion but... The expansion is happening fast.

Example 9 is an excerpt from the news discourse entitled "A Creeping Chinese 'Invasion' " in the *Philippine Star*. The terms "invasion" and "expansion" here depict China's BRI as a "soft invasion" rather than an invasion resorting to force and arms because China is conducting its ideological and economic expansion through various measures and

wants to subtly influence and change the Philippines. China's image is shaped as that of a duplicitous country that harbors evil intentions by saying one thing while doing another.s

4.2.3 Appreciation

The system of appreciation, which is used in the news reports about the BRI in the *Philippine Star*, demonstrates the Philippines' high credit for the BRI as it dovetails with existing mechanisms in the Philippines to achieve balanced sustainable development. These appreciation resources shape China's image as a great nation that upholds the concept of peaceful development with the goal of promoting high-quality development, achieving common prosperity, and proving the world with Chinese wisdom to solve the existing problems. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 display the distribution features of the 184 appreciation resources in total.

According to Figure 4.8, the highest proportion of appreciation resources is valuation (54%), followed by reaction (29%), and composition (17%). The overall distribution of the polarity of those appreciation resources is that 91% are positive and 9% are negative (Figure 4.9). This clarifies that the Philippines is highly satisfied with the impact and significance of China's BRI and that active participation in it is a unique and precious opportunity for the Philippines. Meanwhile, there are certain problems and negative effects in the process of implementing the BRI. In general, using appreciation resources, the *Philippine Star* constructed China's image as that of a great nation that has a positive impact on global development.

In regard to reaction, the words "greater", "positive", "massive", "significant", "better", etc., clearly reflect how priceless the chances and how great the benefit of BRI are for the Philippines. "Successful" and "free" indicate that the cooperation between the Philippines and China has already achieved and will continue to yield promising results. However, the negative resources of reaction, like "loss", "problem", "obstacle", and "hurdle", indicate that certain challenges and obstacles exist in the construction process of the BRI.
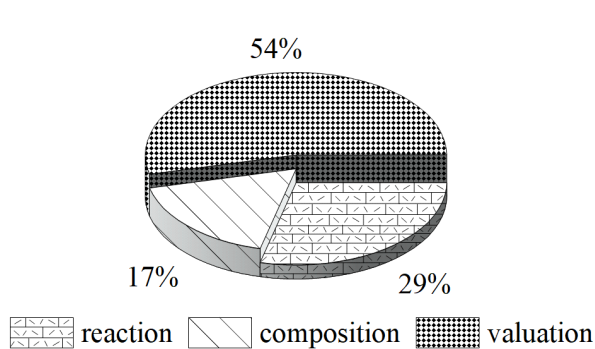

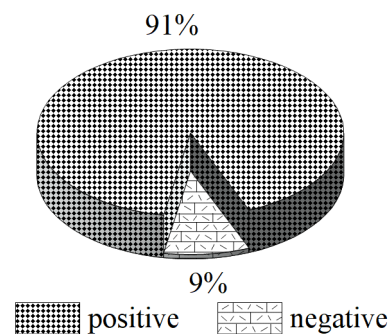*Figure 4.8 The Distribution of Appreciation*

Figure 4.9 The Distribution of the Polarity of Appreciation

(10) At the same time, the ambassador said the President could better pursue the interests of the ASEAN in terms of interconnectivity. So you know, the President opened the direct maritime link between Davao and Indonesia.

Example 10 was stated in an interview with the Philippine Ambassador to China, Romana. He considers that participation in the BRI could further make the Philippines and ASEAN interconnected in many ways, as well as build direct maritime connections between Davos and Indonesia. As part of the positive reaction, "better" directly reveals that the Philippines has benefited tremendously as a partner of China's BRI.

(11) Duterte had successful meetings with the Chinese president and Premier Li Keqiang during his state visit last October.

Example 11 is extracted from a news report titled "Philippines Hopes to Improve Relations with China". According to the coverage, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte had already met with President Xi Jinping before his participation in the Belt and Road Forum. "Successful", a positive resource of reaction, suggests that the last meeting was a friendly exchange between the leaders of China and the Philippines in some respects, which laid a good

foundation for continued and effective implementation of the BRI in the Philippines and further cooperation between the two sides.

(12) From Pakistan to Tanzania to Hungary, projects under President Xi Jinping's signature 'BRI' are being canceled, renegotiated or delayed due to disputes about costs or complaints host countries get too little out of projects built by Chinese companies and financed by loans from Beijing that must be repaid.

China's BRI funded infrastructure construction in the Philippines but encountered difficulties, illustrated by example 12. There are controversies about the cost of construction projects and the fact that the participating countries have limited benefits from the projects done by Chinese companies. The terms "disputes" and "complaints", both of which are negative resources of reaction, suggest an uneven distribution of benefits in the process of implementing specific projects of the BRI. And it is believed that this will greatly affect the follow-up development of the BRI and the relationship between China and other cooperative countries.

The *Philippine Star* mainly uses the composition to portray China as a country that has always adhered to a path of peaceful development and that utilizes existing mechanisms in partner countries to further bilateral or multilateral partnerships and to seek new models of international cooperation and global governance. For example, words such as "balance", "bilateral", "multiple", "common", "fits in with", and "detail with" are used to illustrate China's emphasis on building resilient bilateral relationships with its partners, dovetailing with their existing domestic development plans, and promoting the economic development of those countries. The words "framework" and "network" are intended to illustrate the complexity and effectiveness of the interconnected cooperation established by China's BRI.

(13) According to him, China's BRI fits in with the Philippines' 2017 to 2022 development plan, especially on infrastructure development.

The word "him" in example 13 refers to President Duterte of the Philippines. Here, "fits in with" indicates that the Philippine president believes that China's BRI is in line with the Philippines' development plan from 2017 to 2022, especially the infrastructure development. China is concerned about the development demands and status quo of the partner countries in the BRI and devotes itself to meeting the demands of the cooperative countries as much as possible.

(14) China is spending around $1 trillion to rebuild the Silk Road, a massive trade network across Eurasia.

As reported by the *Philippine Star* in example 14 above, China has been rebuilding the Silk Road. "Network", as the resource of composition, demonstrates the broad scope and impact of specific projects of the BRI, as well as its integrity and interconnectivity.

In terms of valuation, 91% are positive, such as "connectivity", "interest", "innovation", "growth", "progress", and "development", showing that the BRI brings positive value to the development of China's partners and the world, while another 9% are negative, like "harm", "suffer", etc.

(15) "We will be able to participate in the discussions in the One Belt, One Road regarding their plans moving outside China that means trade, infrastructure development," Lopez said, citing the importance of the Philippines' attendance at the international forum.

The view of Philippine Minister of Trade and Industry, Ramon Lopez, on China's BRI is shown in example 15. According to "development", the positive resource of valuation, he has recognized that the BRI contributes to the development of trade and infrastructure in the Philippines and that it brings considerable positive value to Philippine development.

(16) The Chinese people, it said, have suffered the worst environmental impacts of Beijing's actions.

Example 16 expresses the opinion of the U.S. Department of State on the "China's Environmental Abuses Fact Sheet". The U.S. alleges that China is reaping the consequences of the implementation of the BRI, as suggested by the negative resources of valuation—"suffer". The U.S. Department of State declares that China is threatening global wealth and health through its continued exploitation of natural resources and its BRI with deliberate disregard for the environment, and that the Chinese are paying a heavy price for it.

From the above statistics and analysis, it is obvious that the research questions have been answered. The *Philippine Star* employs manifold attitudinal resources in its news reports about the BRI to express its attitude toward the BRI and China and to shape China's national image. The *Philippine Star* has constructed China's image in multiple dimensions, with numerous positive images but also some negative ones.

The overall characteristic of attitudinal resources applied by the *Philippine Star* is that appreciation is more than judgment, and judgment is more than affect. Among the attitudinal resources, there are both positive and negative ones, but the proportion of the positive is much higher than that of the negative. On the whole, the *Philippine Star* holds a positive attitude toward China.

5. Conclusion

Under the theoretical guidance of attitudinal resources, the current study conducted a positive discourse analysis of the news reports about the BRI in the *Philippine Star* to explore the Philippines' attitude toward the BRI and China's national image shaped by it. The study shows that the *Philippine Star* primarily applies the attitudinal resources of appreciation and judgment, supplemented with affect, to voice its opinions on China's BRI and to construct China's national image. On the one hand, the *Philippine Star* demonstrates its approval and support for China's efforts in the realization of infrastructure interconnection and interworking and its favorable attitude toward the capability and tenacity exhibited by China in the implementation of the BRI, as well as its recognition of the benefits that China brings to the Philippines. On the other hand, the Philippines is skeptical about the purpose of China's BRI and fears that insecurity exists in its cooperation with China. It upholds a negative attitude toward the normality, veracity, and propriety of China's BRI and believes that China's BRI is a "double-edged sword" with both advantages and disadvantages. As mentioned earlier, the *Philippine Star* constructed a multidimensional, stereoscopic image of China. It portrays China as a responsible world power that has the strength and ability to realize diversified, independent, balanced, and sustainable development among those cooperative countries and to provide opportunities for global development. At the same time, China is depicted as a hypocritical power that disregards the ecological environment to pursue its own interests and expands in a covert manner. It is worth noting that in the coverage of the BRI in the *Philippine Star*, there are not only the Philippines' views on China's BRI but also China's statement of the BRI, as well as the U.S.'s intervention in the cooperation between China and the Philippines in the process of implementing the BRI.

On the whole, the BRI is officially recognized and supported by the Philippines, but certain challenges and problems also exist and are used as the basis by the US to defame China. Therefore, China is in demand to settle the issues in the further development of the BRI. Firstly, the Philippines and China have always had disputes over the South China Sea. In order to seek further cooperation with the Philippines and better achieve the goal of the BRI, China needs to properly deal with the South China Sea issue and avoid the U.S.'s further distortion of China's intentions and goals of the BRI by using the South China Sea issue as an attack as far as possible. Secondly, during the BRI's implementation, there were certain issues with ecological and environmental destruction. The Chinese government should take into account both development and protection. Thirdly, when China implements the construction projects of the BRI together with the cooperative countries, more genuine efforts should be made to promote a fair distribution of benefits in order to alleviate the concerns of the partners that they will be controlled by China, the great power. Also, measures should be taken to prevent the United States from distorting common prosperity into expansion in disguise.

The contribution of this study lies in its analysis of the Philippines' attitude toward China and its BRI. Investigating China's national image shaped by the news reports about the BRI in the *Philippine Star* helps improve China's national image in the Philippines in a targeted manner. And the positive national image can facilitate the implementation of the BRI in the Philippines. The current research may provide some references for subsequent studies on national images. It is also hoped that this will draw the attention of domestic and international media to its function in national image construction.

References

Boulding, K. E. (1959). National images and international systems. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 3(2), 120-131.
Fang, Y. H. (2006). The image of China in the Philippine media: The case of the Manila Bulletin (Master Thesis, Jinan University).

Guan, W. H. (1999). Theory of National Image (国家形象论). Sichuan：University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, (Chapter 2).

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). An introduction to functional grammar. (3rd ed.). UK: Arnold, (Chapter 1).

Hu, Z. L. (2012). The complementarity of positive and critical discourse analysis. Contemporary Foreign Language Studies, (07), 3-8.

Huang, G. F. (2018). The Philippines and the dream of the "Belt and Road". Memories and Archives, (11), 9-12.

Huang, H. J., Leng, Z. Y., & Gu, Y. Q. (2007). A constructive turn in discourse analysis: From critical discourse analysis to positive discourse analysis (话语分析的建设性转向——从批评话语分析到积极话语分析) . Journal of Zhejiang University of Technology (Social Science), (01), 1-6.

Li, K. S. (2016). Beyond the territorial disputes: The old conceptions and new framework of China-Philippines relations. Asia-Pacific Security and Maritime Affairs, (04), 15-31.

Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond exchange: Appraisal systems in English. Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse, 142-175. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. R. (2004). Positive discourse analysis: Solidarity and change. Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses, 49, 179-200.

Sun, Y. Z. (2002). The connotation and function of national image (国家形象的内涵及其功能). International Forum, (03), 14-21.

Wang, L. P. (2015). The presentation and motivation of China's national image in Philippine mainstream media: Taken the Manila Times as an example (菲律宾主流媒体中的中国国家形象呈现与动因——以《马尼拉时报》为分析样本). Media Observer, (11), 61-63.

Wang, Z. H. (2001). Appraisal system and its operation: The new development of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (评价系统及其运作——系统功能语言学的新发展). Journal of Foreign Languages, (06), 13-20.

Wu, M. H., & Yue, H. (2021). The different interpretations and implications of the Belt and Road Initiative in the changing context of political parties: An analysis based on the Philippine Manila Bulletin (政党更替语境下 "一带一路" 倡议差异化的阐释与启示——基于菲律宾《马尼拉公报》报道的分析). International Communications, (04), 73-76.

Wu, X. J., & Zhang, K. (2016). National image: Rediscussion of concept, characteristics, and research path (国家形象：概念、特征及研究路径之再探讨). Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China), (01), 57-62.

Xu, X. G. (1996). Issues on national image in international news communication (国际新闻传播中的国家形象问题). Journalism and Communication, 3(2), 36-46.

Ye, Q. (2014). A framing analysis of the Philippines' mainstream media's construction of China's image: In case of Daily Inquirer (Mater Thesis, Guangxi University).

Zhang, K., & Xu, X. G. (2007). Rumination on national image (国家形象刍议). Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication, (3), 11-16.

Zhu, Y. S. (2006). Positive discourse analysis: A counterpoint and complement to critical discourse analysis (积极话语分析：对批评话语分析的反拨与补充). The Journal of English, (04), 36-42.