

The Discursive Construction of China's National Image from the Perspective of Transitivity---A Case Study of Speech by President Xi Jinping at the Opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly

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Abstract

The construction of the national image has recently been a hot research topic. How China constructs its national image during the fighting against COVID-19 is worth much exploration. Taking the speech delivered by Chinese president Xi Jinping as the research data, the transitivity system in SFL as the basic theoretical framework, the study tries to explore the construction of China's national image through the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Based on the distribution and analyses of transitivity process and participants, the study finds out three types of China's images during the fighting against COVID-19: the forerunner in fighting the COVID-19, the builder of a community with a shared future, the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision.

Key words: National Image, Transitivity, President's Speech, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The reputation is of great importance to a nation and many researches have been devoted to the construction of national image from various perspectives. In 2020, the year of fighting against COVID-19, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered several speeches and expressed China's position and attitude through mass media to the world, which help to shape the image of China. Nevertheless, there have been rare discursive analyses of President Xi Jinping's speech from the perspective of transitivity system. This study adopts transitivity system to analyze the speech delivered by President Xi Jinping at the Opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly and explores how China's national image is constructed in this text.

2. Literature Review

Many researches have been done to explore the construction of national image from perspectives of international relations, communication and linguistics.

The concept of national image comes into being in the course of international exchanges. From the perspective of international relations, scholars' researches on national image mostly concentrate on the influence of national image on international relations and discussion on the corresponding strategies. Based on political and social theories, Wendt (1999) proposed an international system of social construction and explained the main arguments of constructivism, having a profound impact on the construction of national image. Nye (2004) pointed out that a country's political and cultural soft power could attract and conquer other countries. Morgenthau (2006) studied the construction of national image from the perspective of prestige and explored the relationship between prestige and national image.

From the perspective of communication, Perry (1987) studied the influence of national news on the construction of national image under the new international order. The study of the communication of national image based on news discourse is also the focus of many scholars. Chen Jun (2020) proposed to further strengthen exchanges and interactions with countries and regions along the "One Belt and One Road", actively integrate into the international communication stage, and contribute to the construction of a three-dimensional and rich national image of China. Some scholars also explored the construction of national image from the communication of cultural film and television industry. Zhang Yuejiao (2020) explored China's national image constructed by the International Film Festival along the Belt and Road, reflected on the contents of overseas communication, and on this basis, put forward the way to further expand the overseas dissemination of Chinese films.

Many scholars explore the construction of national image from the perspective of linguistics. Norman (1992) pointed out that discourse and society were connected with each other.

Discourse shaped society and was also constructed by society. Some scholars analyzed foreign news from the perspective of critical discourse analyses, trying to analyze the misunderstanding or distortion of China's national image by foreign media. Pan Yanyan (2017), from the perspective of critical discourse analyses, combined the intertextuality of news and appraisal theory to reveal the discourse strategies of American mainstream news media in constructing China's image and great power relations. She pointed out that American mainstream media tended to use negative evaluating verbs, reporting verbs, adverbs, adjectives, reporting clauses and some direct references to construct China's image. At the same time, many scholars devoted themselves to the study of self-construction of national image. Jiang Xiaoxiao (2017) analyzed the process of constructing national image from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics by interpreting the speech delivered by Sri Lanka President Sirisena at the 70th UN General Assembly. In recent years, the researches on the construction of national image from the perspective of transitivity have attracted the attention of scholars. Taking Halliday's systemic functional linguistics as the theoretical framework and using quantitative and qualitative method, Gao Min (2019) discussed the construction of China's national image in the English translation of the reports of the 19th National Congress from four aspects of high-frequency words, transitivity, modality and thematic.

Through reviewing previous studies, we can see that many scholars have aimed to explore the construction of national image from various perspectives of international relations, communication and linguistics, including transitivity system. So, the feasibility of applying transitivity to study the construction of national image has been confirmed. However, the interpretation of Xi Jinping's speech during the pandemic period from the perspective of transitivity system has not been paid too much attention. Therefore, this study adopts transitivity system to analyze the text of speech delivered by President Xi Jinping and explores how national image is constructed.

3. Data and Methodology

The study chooses *Speech delivered by President Xi Jinping at the Opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly* as the research data. On May 18, 2020, President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the Opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly, in which President Xi emphasized the extreme circumstance of COVID-19 pandemic, expressed China's friendly attitude to provide assistance to countries affected and called for the international solidarity and cooperation in the whole world.

UAM Corpus Tool 3.3 is applied to carry out data processing work; Table and Wordle are applied to present the statistical results.

To achieve the objectives of the study, quantitative and qualitative methods are applied. With quantitative analyses, the author represents the global distribution of process types and components, and corresponding local distribution of each process in detail. On the other hand, with qualitative analyses, the author analyzes how China's national image is constructed on the basis of statistical results.

4. Analytical Framework

Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), language expresses three main kinds of meanings simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Transitivity, as one of the important subsystems in SFL, realizes the experiential meaning of ideational functions. Through deliberate exploration and modification, Halliday (1994) makes a relatively comprehensive explanation about transitivity. According to Halliday (1994), a process is made up of three components: the process, participants and circumstances. And, seven types of processes are classified: the material, mental, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes.

In the past 50 years, many scholars, like Matthiessen, Fawcett and Hu Zhuanglin are devoted to the refinement of transitivity. However, there are some problems in the literature. One is that there is no agreement on the number of process types. The other is that Halliday's approach and Fawcett's approach needs to be taken into consideration together. Under such circumstance, authors represented by He Wei present a more detailed and comprehensive description of transitivity configurations, which are presented by Figure 1. In the speech delivered by President Xi Jinping, action process, relational process, mental process and communicative process are applied.

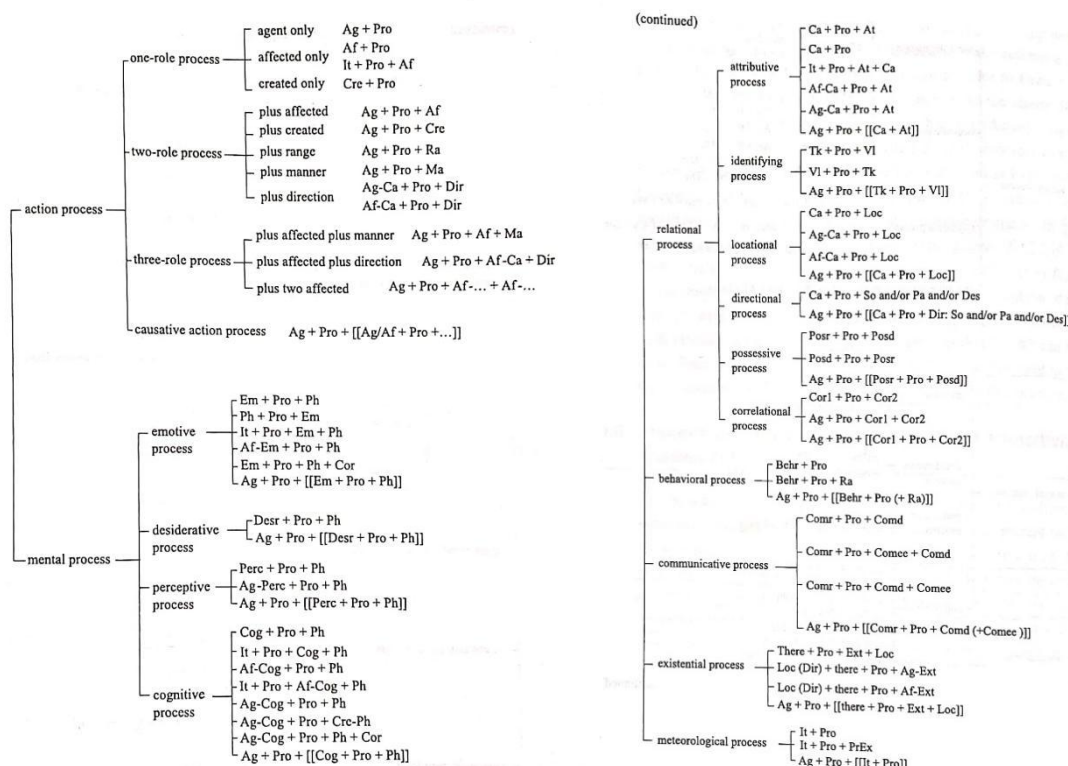


Figure1. The configuration of transitivity system constructed by He Wei

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 The Distribution Features of Transitivity Process and Participant

According to He Wei (2017), when applying transitivity system to analyze the discourse, the Process and Participant Roles are discussed to reveal the intention of the author. After annotating, the whole discourse consists of 369 clauses.

The process is the kernel of the transitivity system, linking the semantic organization and experiential realization. In the following, the author presents the features of the distribution of process type used in President Xi Jinping’s speech. The frequency and percentage of the distribution of process are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The distribution of process

Process Type	Number	Percentage
Actional Process	105	73.94%
Relational Process	17	11.97%
Mental Process	15	10.56%
Communicative Process	5	3.52%
Total	142	100%

It is seen from Table 1 that the whole discourse consists of 142 clauses. The distribution of process includes action process (73.94%), relational process (11.97%), mental process (10.56%), communicative process (3.52%). According to this table, it is concluded apparently that action process accounts for the largest proportion, with the percentage of 73.94. Then, the relational process and mental process also take important roles in this discourse, which account for 11.97% and 10.56% respectively. Finally, the communicative process accounts for the smallest proportion, with the percentage of 3.52.

Participant is a key component of transitivity system and the dominator of Process. The frequency and the distribution of participant in the whole discourses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.The distribution of participant

Participant Type	Number	Percentage
Actional Process	148	66.67%
Relational Process	37	16.67%
Mental Process	26	11.71%
Communicative Process	11	4.95%
Total	222	100%

It is seen from Table 2 that the whole discourse consists of 222 transitivity participants. The distribution of participant includes action process (66.67%), relational process (16.67%), mental process (11.71%), communicative process (4.95%). It is concluded apparently that action process accounts for the largest proportion, with the percentage of 66.67%. Then, the relational process and mental process also take important roles in this discourse, which account for 16.67% and 11.71% respectively. Finally, the communicative process accounts for the smallest proportion, with the percentage of 4.95, and of course, it cannot be neglected.

Based on the distribution features of transitivity process and participant, it is deduced that that this speech mainly emphasizes what is done, has been done, or will be done. Put it clearly, the President Xi Jinping pays attention to introduce what China has done and will be done to fight the pandemic and put up with his proposals that World Health Organization and the whole society should act as one to take measures faced with such circumstance.

5.2 The Analyses of Transitivity Process and Participant

5.2.1 The analyses of action process and participant

Generally speaking, action process describes the world in terms of doing and happening. According to Table 1, action process accounts for the largest proportion, with the percentage of 73.94, more than half of the whole process. In fact, action process is mainly used to convey two pieces of information. For one thing, through action process, President Xi Jinping has described China's contribution to the response of the COVID-19 and promised that China will continue to support global fight against the pandemic, which is seen from example 1. For another, through action process, President Xi has made proposals to the world to fight the virus and called on human beings all over the world to come work together, which is seen from example 2.

Example 1: We (Agent) have provided (process) information (Affected-Possessed) to (Process Extension) WHO and relevant countries (Affected- Possessor) in a most timely fashion.

Example 2: We (Agent) must strengthen (process) global governance (Affected) in the area of public health.

Base on the comprehensive analyses on the discourse, the overall employment of the words in action process and their number are presented in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3. The realizations of action process(Note: The part in parentheses is Process Extension)

Action process			
Words	Number	Words	Number
work	8	make	5
defeat	3	provide	3
do (everything)	3	help	3
fight	2	tide (over)	2
support	2	bring (under control)	2
protect	2	step (up)	2
lead	2	send	2
strengthen	2	establish	2
build	2	restore	2
hold	1	battle	1
hit	1	prevail (over)	1
contain	1	claim	1
face	1	confront	1
Catch	1	affect	1

flinch	1	tackle	1
look (out for)	1	Pull (together)	1
forge	1	come (together)	1
turn	1	share	1
safeguard	1	do (our best)	1
act	1	meet	1
bolster	1	deploy	1
release	1	Take(steps)	1
assist	1	Curb	1
rage	1	boost	1
Put(first)	1	accelerate	1
need	1	Sum up	1
move	1	applaud	1
stem	1	increase	1
foster	1	expose	1
pursue	1	respond	1
advance	1	conduct	1
save	1	reopen	1
mobilize	1	set up	1
come (knocking)	1	implement	1
improve	1	address	1
permit	1	keep	1
ramp (up)	1		

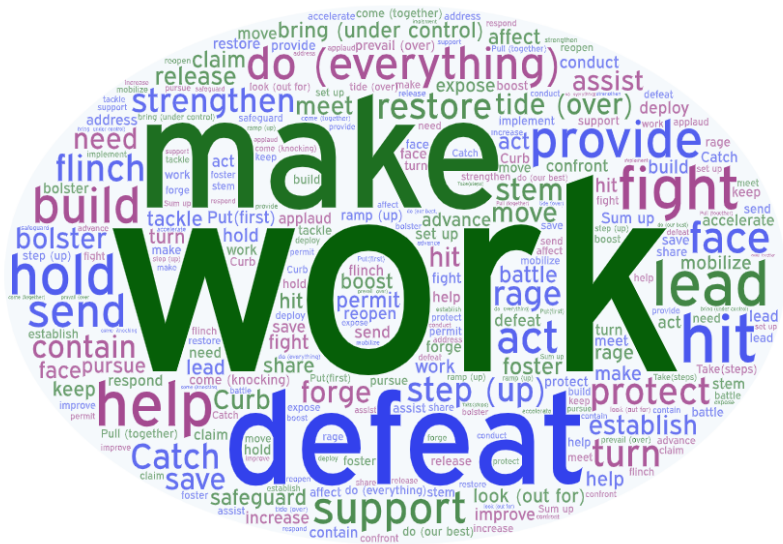


Figure 2. The realizations of action process

According to the Table and Figure, the author can draw the conclusion that the word “work” and “make” are mainly used in the discourse, which are initiative and creative words. Besides, “defeat”, “provide”, “do (everything)” and “help” come the next, also playing an important role in expressing the pragmatic attitude and determination to defeat the virus of Chinese government.

When it comes to the Participant Roles of action process, the Agent and the Affected account for the largest proportion. Besides, the Created, the Manner, the Direction and the Location account for a small proportion but cannot be neglected. According to the analyses of the statistical results, the realization of Participant Roles in action process is presented in Table 4, Figure 3, and Figure 4.

Table 4. The realizations of the Agent

Agent	Number
we	28
China	5
the human race	2
WHO	2
COVID-19	2
the international community	2
the people of all countries	2
the virus	1
the world	1
Chinese medical teams	1
human beings	1
a major health emergency	1
countries where conditions permit	1
conditions	1
the people of the world	1
the hardest hit countries	1



Figure 3. The realizations of the Agent

The Agent is the initiator of the process. According to Table 4 and Figure 3, the most frequently used word is “we”, indicating that the Chinese government represented by President Xi Jinping stands the ground that human beings should act as one to fight the COVID-19. “The human race”, “the international community”, “the people of all countries”, “the world”, “human beings” and “the people of the world” all convey the same meaning as “we”. The word “China” also mainly used to express China’s attitude that China is devoted to the career of defeating the virus.



Figure 4.The realizations of the Affected

When it comes to the Affected, it is seen as the aim and intention of the process, playing the important role in transitivity system. According to Figure 4, *“the virus”* is used with the highest proportion, indicating that the purpose of this discourse is fighting the virus. And, *“this novel coronavirus”* is also mainly used to present the topic. The word *“support”* is also mainly used, indicating that Chinese government stands the ground that the career of fighting the virus should be support by the world and China will give full support to this work. Besides, the use of *“the global response”*, *“international cooperation”*, *“the world”* indicates that Chinese government is devoted to build the world as a community of shared future. By the way, the application of *“Africa”*, *“African countries”* and *“the hardest-hit countries”* expresses China’s concern for the hardest-hit areas.

In addition to the Affected, the Created, the Manner, the Direction and the Location also account for a small proportion. The Created is mainly used to introduce what has been done and will be done to fight the virus such as *“concerted efforts”* and *“global and regional reserve centers of anti-pandemic supplies”*. The Created is also used to strengthen the standpoint of building a community with a shared future of Chinese government, such as *“a community with a shared future for mankind”*, *“a global community of health for all”*, *“a global humanitarian response depot and hub and a cooperation mechanism”*. The Manner is used to explain how the process is performed, which is realized by *“in an objective and impartial manner”*, *“with the UN”*, *“with other G20 members”*, *“with the international community”*. The Direction and the Location are also used to complete the expression of the attitude of Chinese government. Combined with the Affected, these participle roles can help to make contribution to the introduction of the standpoint of Chinese government.

5.2.2 The Analyses of Other Processes and Participants

In spite of the largest proportion accounted by action process, the role of relational process, mental process and communicative process cannot be neglected.

Generally speaking, relational process is mainly used to describe something to be something else with “being”. According to Table 1, relational process accounts for a relatively small proportion, with the percentage of 11.97. According to He Wei, attributive process includes six kinds of process, among which, four types are applied to this discourse, the attributive process, the identifying process, the possessive process and the correlational process. Based on statistical result, the attributive process and the identifying process account for the larger proportion. According to realization of attributive process and identifying process, it is concluded that the attitude of Chinese government is interpreted from which. First of all, it is of great importance to fight against the COVID-19, which is seen from example 3. Second, Chinese government hold the ground that the human being in the world is a community with a shared future, so people should come together and act as one, which is seen from example 4. Finally, China is willing to give full support to the career of fighting the virus, which is seen from example 5.

Example 3: What we are facing (Value) is (Process) the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II (Token).

Example 4: Mankind (Carrier) is (Process) a community with a shared future (Attribute).

Example 5: This (Carrier) will be (Process) China's contribution to ensuring vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries (Attribute).

Compared with action process that has something to do with our experience of the material world, mental process bears connection with our experience of the world of our own consciousness. In mental process, *support* and *ensure* are mainly used to express the attitude of Chinese government represented by President Xi Jinping, indicating that China is willing to give full support to the work of fighting the virus. The Sensor is mainly realized by *I* and *China*, indicating that this discourse is devoted to express China’s standpoint. As for the Phenomenon, the use of *“international cooperation and the battle for saving lives as well”*, *“the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19”*, *“the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind”*, *“work with the international community”*, *“global public health”* indicates that Chinese government support the idea of building a community with a shared future. Besides, the vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries indicate China’s concern for the developing countries.

In addition to action process, relational process and mental process, the communicative process is also applied to convey President Xi Jinping’s attitude, shortening the distance between the speaker and the audience.

5.3 National Image of China Realized by Transitivity System

5.3.1 The Forerunner in Fighting the Virus

According to Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4, the frequent use of “*work*”, “*make*”, “*defeat*”, “*we*”, “*China*” and “*the virus*” clearly indicates that the main purpose of action process is to express what China has and will do to fight and control the virus. Even though accounting for a relatively small proportion, the relational process also points out the theme of the speech is COVID-19. Besides, the mental process can also help to depict the national image. In the following, the author presents how these three transitivity components contribute to the construction of national image of China as the forerunner in fighting the virus.

As for the Process, based on Table 3 and Figure 2, three conclusions have been drawn. First, the most frequently used words are “*work*”, “*make*”, and “*defeat*”. The application of these active verbs indicates that Chinese government is devoted to promoting the career of controlling the pandemic. Second, various verbs are used to indicate China’s concrete actions to defeat the disease, including “*provide*”, “*send*”, “*establish*”, “*deploy*”, “*safeguard*”, etc. The diversity of the application of concrete verbs indicates that Chinese government does not utter empty words simply, but put the commitment into practice effectively. That is to say, Chinese government has taken various measures to protect people, and will continue this career in the coming future. Third, the use of “*help*” suggests that Chinese government not only deals with the problem of COVID-19 in China itself, but also takes the health of people all over the world into consideration. Chinese government is willing to help other areas affected.

As for the Agent, based on Table 4 and Figure 3, the frequent use of “*we*” and “*China*” indicates that China is the initiator of the process of controlling the pandemic. Besides, the use of “*Chinese medical teams*” also indicates that Chinese government has taken concrete and effective methods to fight the disease. The use of “*the hardest hit countries*” presents Chinese government’s concern about other areas affected. The use of “*COVID-19*” and “*the virus*” emphasizes the objective of the speech is fighting the virus. Chinese government has born the responsibility as the forerunner of fighting the virus.

As for the Affected, based on Figure 4, three major findings are made. First, the frequent use of “*the virus*” and “*this novel coronavirus*” indicates that the theme of the speech is the COVID-19; the frequent use of “*support*” indicates that China is willing to provide people all over the world with the support to fight the disease. Second, various words are used to introduce China’s concrete measures confronting the disease, including “*information sharing*”, “*the genome sequence*”, “*global research*”, “*Chinese medical expert teams*” etc. Third, the use of “*countries in need*”, “*Africa*”, and “*African countries*” indicated that Chinese government not only pay attention to Chinese people, but also aims to help other areas that have been affected to overcome the disease. As for the Created, based on Figure 4, the use of “*concerted efforts*”, “*a major contribution*”, “*experience*” and so on also indicates China’s contribution to fighting the disease.

From the statistical result, it is interpreted that during the period of fighting the COVID-19, China has acted as the forerunner and is willing to shoulder the responsibility to help other countries. China’s image as the forerunner is interpreted from the action process. Then, the author uses exact examples to interpret this image from the perspective of the action process.

Example 6 (action process): We (Agent) has provided (Process) information (Affected-Possessed) to (Process Extension) WHO and relevant countries (Affected-Possessor) in a most timely fashion.

Example 6 is President Xi Jinping’s description of China’s contribution to fighting the pandemic. This clause is seen as the combination of action process and relational process. The Agent is “*we*”, referring to China. Combined with relational process, the Affected-Possessed is “*information*”, referring to the useful information China has acquired about fighting the virus; the Affected-Possessor is “*WHO and relevant countries (Affected-Possessor)*”. And the whole process is realized and organized by “*has provided*”, reflecting the objective fact that China has made contribution to the control of pandemic all over the world. To be specific, the analyses of this action process indicate that China has made great progress in fighting the virus and has shared the precious experience and information to the whole world.

Example 7 (action process): China (Agent) will provide (Process) US\$2 billion (Affected-Possessed) over two years to help (Process) with (Process Extension) COVID-19 response (Affected) and with (Process Extension) economic and social development in affected countries, especially developing countries (Affected).

Example 7 is the first commitment made by Chinese government to further promote the career of controlling pandemic. Example 7 includes two clauses.

In the first clause, the Agent is “China”; the Affected is “US\$2 billion”; the Process is “will provide”. In the second clause, the Agent is hidden China; the Affected is “COVID-19 response and economic and social development in affected countries”, “especially developing countries”; the whole clause is connected by “help”. The whole clause indicates how China will do to help other areas in need. Base on the analyses of Example 7, it is concluded that after making contribution to the control of the virus, Chinese government is willing to continue giving full support to the career of fighting the virus all over the world. It is worth mentioning that the affected countries, especially developing countries are emphasized, indicating that Chinese government has great sense of responsibility and bears great concern for the affected countries.

In spite of the action process, the relational process also plays an important role in depicting the national image of China. The realization of the attributive process can help to depict the national image of China. As for the Carrier, the use of “COVID-19 vaccine development and deployment in China” introduces the commitment made by Chinese government in fighting the virus. The realization of the identifying process also can have effect. As for the Token, the use of “Helping them (the affected areas) build capacity” combined with the corresponding Value – “our top priority in COVID-19 response” indicates that after controlling the pandemic in China, Chinese government is devoted to provide necessary help for other countries in need. The following 8 example is used to explain how the relation process can help to construct the national image as the forerunner of fighting the disease in detail.

Example 8 (relational process): What we are facing (Value) is (Process) the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II (Token).

At the beginning of the discourse, the use of a relational process emphasizes the severe circumstance of the virus and the importance of fighting the virus. In Example 8 above, the Token is “the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II”; the Value is “What we are facing”, connected by “is”. Based on the pretext, what we are facing refers to the hardest attack implemented by COVID-19. The whole clause indicates that the theme of this speech is fighting the virus and Chinese government represented by President Xi Jinping is paying much attention on the control of the virus.

In addition to the action process and relational process, the mental process also has effect in depicting the national image of China as the forerunner. The mental process expresses the attitude of Chinese government represented by President Xi Jinping directly. The frequent use of “support” and “ensure” indicates that Chinese government aims to support the career of fighting the disease and ensure people’s health all over the world. As for the Sensor, the frequent use of “I” (President Xi Jinping) and “China” indicates that China is the initiator of fighting the disease. The use of “the virus” emphasizes the theme of this speech. As for the Phenomenon, the use of “the operation of anti-pandemic supply chains” and “vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries” indicates that Chinese government aims to apply specific method to promote the process of fighting the pandemic and expresses the concern of Chinese government to the hardest hit countries.

In conclusion, the national image of China as the forerunner in fighting the virus is interpreted through the analyses of the action process, the relational process and the mental process.

5.3.2 The Builder of a Community with a Shared Future

According to Table 4, Figure 3, and Figure 4, the frequent use of “we”, “the human race”, “the international community”, “the people of all countries”, “global response” etc., indicates that Chinese government stands the ground that the world is a community with a shared future and the human being should come together and act as one to fight the virus. Besides, even though accounting for a relatively smaller proportion, the relational process, the mental process and the communicative process can also help to depict the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future. In the following, the author presents how these three transitivity components contribute to the construction of national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future.

In the action process, as for the Process, based on Table 3 and Figure 2, the use of “pull together”, “forge”, “come together”, “help”, “assist” indicates that China regards the human beings all over the world as one and is willing to provide assistance for other areas in need. As for the Agent, based on Table 4 and Figure 3, the frequent use of “we”, “the human race”, “the international community”, “the people of all countries”, “human beings”, “the people of the world”, etc. indicates that Chinese government is devoted to building a community with a shared future. The use of “the hardest hit countries” presents China’s concern to areas in need. As for the Affected, the use of “the global response”, “international cooperation”, “the world”, “resources worldwide”, “global governance”, etc. clearly presents the attitude of Chinese government calling on the whole society to pull together to fight the disease.

The use of “countries in need”, “Africa”, “African countries”, “the hardest hit countries” presents the concern of Chinese government to the people all over the world especially the hardest hit countries. As for the Created, based on Figure 4, the use of “concerted effort”, “a community with a shared future”, “a global community of health for all”, “a global humanitarian response depot and hub”, “a cooperation mechanism” points out that Chinese government holds the standpoint that the fight against the pandemic requires the efforts of people all over the world. In addition, the realization of the Manner, including the words “with the UN”, “with other G20 members”, “with the international community” emphasizes the importance of cooperation faced with the virus. The realization of the Feature, including the words “to places where they are needed the most”, “to over 50 African countries and the African Union”, “to the African continent” expresses that Chinese government pay attention to the people in need especially the African people. Then, the author elaborates how the national image of China as the builder of the community with a shared future is constructed through the action process with Example 9.

Example 9 (action process): China (Agent) has sent (Process) a tremendous amount of medical supplies and assistance (Affected-Carrier) to over 50 African countries and the African Union (Direction).

Example 4 introduces the assistance from Chinese government to African countries. Combined with relational process, example 9 is a special action process, including the Agent, “China”, the Process “has sent”, the Affected-Carrier, “a tremendous amount of medical supplies and assistance”, and the Direction, “to over 50 African countries and the African Union”. It is seen that Chinese government bears the concern for the affected countries and has provided support to them, regarding the people all over the world as a community with a shared future.

Next, in the relational process, in attributive process, the Carrier “mankind” combined with its corresponding Attribute “a community with a shared future” and the Carrier “solidarity and cooperation” combined its corresponding Attribute “a sure way through which we, the people of the world, can defeat this novel coronavirus” indicates that Chinese government holds the standpoint that human beings should come together to fighting the disease, which is of vital significance. In identifying process, the Token “solidarity and cooperation” combined its corresponding Value “our most powerful weapon for defeating the virus” emphasizes the importance of solidarity and cooperation. The Token “Helping them build capacity” combined with its corresponding Value “our top priority in COVID-19 response” presents that Chinese government show great concern to people all over the world especially the African countries. Then, the author elaborates how the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future is constructed through the relational process with Example 10 and Example 11.

Example 10 (attributive process): Solidarity and cooperation (Carrier) is (Process) our most powerful weapon for defeating the virus (Attribute).

Example 10 is a simple attributive process, a subtype of relational process, including the Carrier, “Solidarity and cooperation”, the Process “is” and the Attribute “our most powerful weapon for defeating the virus”, indicating that Chinese government holds the standpoint that the human being should come together to fight the virus because the solidary and cooperation is powerful.

Example 11 (possessive process): Developing countries, African countries in particular, (Possessor) have (Process) weaker public health systems (Possessed).

Example 11 is a simple possessive process, a subtype of relational process, including the Possessor, “Developing countries, African countries in particular”, the Possessed “weaker public health systems” and the Process “have”, indicating that the developing countries need more attention in fighting the virus and Chinese government has noticed that and taken measures to help this area, which is seen from Example 9 above.

In addition to the action process and the relational process, the realization of the Phenomenon with “international cooperation”, “the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19”, “the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind”, “work with the international community”, “to ensure not just the life and health of its own citizens, but also global public health” clearly expresses the attitude of Chinese government to build a community with a shared future. Then, the author elaborates how the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future is constructed through the mental process with Example 12.

Example 12 (mental process): China (Sensor) stands for (Process) the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind (Phenomenon).

Example 12 is a simple mental process, including the Sensor, “China”, the Process “stand for”, and the Phenomenon, “China stands for the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind”.

From this clause, it is obvious that Chinese government holds the standpoint that people all over the world should come together to conquer the pandemic and is devoted to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Finally, in addition to relational process, action process and mental process, the rare communicative process is also applied to help construct the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future. The communicative process utters the information that the Communicator aims to convey. Represented by President Xi Jinping, Chinese government expressed its attitude to the world. One of the examples of the communicative process is shown below, which is analyzed in detail to interpret the national image of China.

Example 13 (communicative process): I (Communicator) call on (Process) all of us (Communicatee) to come together and work as one (Communicated).

According to Example 13, “I”, the President Xi Jinping, is the Communicator; “call on” is the Process, and “to come together and work as one” is the Communicated. From this communicative, the attitude of Chinese government represented by President Xi Jinping is easily interpreted.

In conclusion, the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future is interpreted through the action process, the relational process, the mental process and the communicative process.

5.3.3 The Owner of Long-term and Comprehensive Vision

In addition to the national image of China as the forerunner in fighting the virus and the builder of a community with a shared future, after applying transitivity system to analyze this discourse, it is interpreted that China is a nation with long-term and comprehensive vision. Chinese government not only pays attention to the current control of the virus, but also takes the circumstance after the virus into consideration. Based on Table 3, Figure 2 and Figure 4, the expressions like “restore”, “reopen”, “sum up”, “economic and social development”, “businesses and schools”, “experience” express the comprehensive consideration of Chinese government after the control of the pandemic. In addition to the action process, the mental process can also be used to depict the national image of China as the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision. In the following, the author elaborates how this national image of China is constructed through the action process and the mental process.

In the action process, based on Table 3, Figure 2 and Figure 4, the national image of China as the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision is interpreted. The realization of Process “restore” combined with its corresponding Affected “economic and social development” indicates that Chinese government not only pays attention to the control of the pandemic, but also concerns the restoration and the development of economy and society, bearing an long-term vision. The realization of Process “reopen” combined with its corresponding Affected “businesses and schools” indicates that Chinese government is devoted to restore the operation of the businesses and schools after the control of the pandemic. The realization of the Process “sum up” combined with its corresponding Affected “experience” indicates that Chinese government aims to reflect on the experience and the lesson brought about by fighting the pandemic. Then, the author elaborates how the national image of China as the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision is constructed through the action process with Example 14 and Example 15.

Example 14 (action process): We (Agent) must restore (Process) economic and social development (Affected).

Example 14 is the fifth proposal come up with by President Xi Jinping. In this clause, “we” acts as the Agent; “must restore” acts as the Process; “economic and social development” acts as the Affected, indicating that after the control of the current virus, Chinese government does not neglect the restoration of the society. And, Chinese government not only pay attention to the restoration of the society, but also emphasizes the recollection of the default and experience during the fight, which is seen from Example 15.

Example 15 (action process): we (Agent) must strengthen (Process) global governance in the area of public health (Affected).

Example 15 is also the fifth proposal come up with by President Xi Jinping. In Example 15, “we” acts as the Agent; “must strengthen” acts as the Process and “global governance in the area of public health” acts as the Affected, indicating that Chinese government pay attention to the recollection and improvement after solving the problem.

In addition to the action process, the mental process can also help to depict the national image of China as the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision.

The realization of the Phenomenon with “*the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19*” suggests that Chinese government put emphasis on the global governance of the health system worldwide and comprehensive reflection over the experience. Then, the author elaborates how this national image of China is constructed through the mental process with Example 16.

Example 16 (mental process): China (Sensor) supports (Process) the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19 after it is brought under control to sum up experience and address deficiencies (Phenomenon).

In Example 16, the Sensor is “China”; the Process is “supports”; the Phenomenon is “*the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19 after it is brought under control to sum up experience and address deficiencies*”. From this clause, it is interpreted more clearly that Chinese government emphasize the global governance of public health; the recollection on the experience and the improvement on the deficiencies.

In conclusion, the image as the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision is depicted through the action process and the mental process.

Conclusion

Our study has got three major findings. First, in Xi’s speech, four kinds of transitivity types, including action process, relational process, mental process and communicative process, are involved, among which, the action process accounts for the largest proportion. Second, each type of transitivity process exerts its contribution to the theme of the discourse. In this speech, action process is mainly used to present what Chinese government has done and will do to control the pandemic, making the discourse more authentic. Relational process is mainly used to present the current situation of the COVID-19 faced by the whole world and the importance of building a community with a shared future, making the discourse more objective. Mental process and communicative process are mainly used to express China’s attitude towards the pandemic, shortening the distance between the speaker and the audience. Third, based on the distribution and analyses of transitivity process and participant, China’s image as the forerunner in fighting the COVID-19, the builder of a community with a shared future, the owner of long-term and comprehensive vision is explored.

This study is theoretically and practically significant. Theoretically, the study applies the transitivity system to analyze the speech delivered by President Xi Jinping and reveals its role in the construction of national image, broadening the scope and perspective of the research on China’s national image. Practically, the discursive analyses of Xi Jinping’s speech can contribute to readers’ understanding of the national image of China as the builder of a community with a shared future, promoting the active construction and dissemination of China’s national image.

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