

# Corpus-based Study on Chinese Image Construction of The Opening Speech of CIIE

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**Abstract.** This study conducts an empirical study on how President Xi used Chinese image in his English version speech at the opening session of the fourth CIIE, and what terms he used in spreading Chinese image in international discourse. By setting up the limitation of N on the range of (Range) to 4, N more than 1 and less than 10, and the frequency (Freq) greater than 2, the paper makes corpus-based group discussion, and summarizes President Xi's speech covers a large number of economic terms and some verbal clauses to create interactive effects with readers. They build an image in which China actively participates in world economic development, promotes multilateral trade and cooperation, deepens the concept of a community with a shared future, and creates a fair and just international atmosphere. In addition, the research reveals the proportional relationship between N and N-gram structure in the corpus, and applies it in the research of international discourse construction and Chinese image, so as to provide reference value for related research.

**Keywords:** Corpus Linguistics; CIIE; International Discourse Construction; Chinese Image.

## 1. Introduction

The China International Import Expo (China International Import Exposition) is the world's first national exhibition with an import theme. Since the first CIIE was held in Shanghai on November 5, 2018, President Xi deeply stressed in his opening ceremony speech that China's continuous opening-up since China joined to the WTO, which has stimulated the surging spring tide of China's development and activated a lot of the world economy<sup>[9]</sup>. China has conveyed the trend of economic globalization and actively invested in the current trend. Meanwhile, the CIIE also reflects the strong strength of the Chinese, constantly strengthens the concept of win-win multilateral trade and economy, and creates a global image of inclusive, open, cooperative and mutually beneficial development. According to CIIE's official, in 2019, more than 180 countries, regions or organizations and nearly 3,800 domestic and foreign enterprises participated. In 2020, the third session includes 70% of the world top 500 and leading enterprises, and 411 new technology projects from around the world. By the fourth session of 2021, 80% of the world's top 500 and leading enterprises and 2,900 enterprises will participate in the international expo. Therefore, we can clearly see that the success of the expo and the fruitful harvest cannot be separated from the self-plastic construction and external publicity of external discourse. Among them, the opening speech is one of the best examples of self-shaping the Chinese image.

Baker (2010) points out that speeches contacted by the influential people can also illustrate the hidden power of the discourse. Therefore, in the opening speech of the fourth session, how President Xi shapes the image of China, and what high-frequency words to choose and what kinds of China Image to convey by the speech to the outside world, can we capture? Followed by these issues, this article is selected from the English column of China Daily to conduct empirical research on President Xi in the opening speech of the total four CIIEs.

## 2. Previous Study and Methodology

Hu Kaibao (2019) pointed out that the construction of discourse consciously generates specific ways of discourse expression followed by a concrete way and purpose. In essence, discourse can extract different levels of discourse expression through the investigation of a certain phenomenon,

and construct the ideology represented by discourse. The opening speech of the CIIE, on behalf of state leaders, is connected with the international community, so it can fully demonstrate the Chinese image. In recent years, the international discourse study of Chinese image in linguistics is mainly reflected in the construction of Chinese discourse system; (Xiao Kaong 2020; Zhang Jieyu 2021) and the construction of diplomatic discourse (Hu Kaibao, Li Chan 2018; Hu Kaibao 2019; Wang Fuqin 2021). The method based on corpus mainly focuses on translation in diplomatic discourse (He Xueyan 2009; Hu Kaibao and Li Xin 2017).

Relevant researches on Chinese image in national leaders' speech are mainly emergent from a domestic perspective, such as Hu Kaibao, Tian Xujun (2018) collect 2000 to 2016 the government work report English translation corpus, analyzing of the speech characteristics and text effect, and point out that the English translation should use less high value of modal verbs and no dominant sentences, more to close the psychological distance between the government and the people. Li Junfang (2020) used the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis to study the English translation of President Xi's opening speech at the Belt and Road International Summit Forum, and finds that if trying to achieve a true sense of equivalence, the translator have to apply appropriate representations to make the ideology to interact with the discourse to produce the ideology represented by the language. Therefore, ideology is the foundation of self-shaping national image, and studies the discourse vocabulary can interpret the multiple elements of constructing national image.

Hence the researches on International Discourse Construction are mainly concentrating on the English translation of national leaders' foreign speeches, but the method of combining corpus in this direction is rare. Most of them study the various linguistic levels of translated text, rather than focusing on vocabulary. On this paper, we collected English translations of President Xi Jinping's opening speeches in the total four times of CIIE from 2018 to 2021. Relying on Antconc3.4.4 self-built corpus, we have 8341 tokens, 8337 N-gram tokens, and 5317 types. A list of N-gram is a form of a word list that belongs to a multi-word column order. (Liang Maocheng, 2016:77-78) Therefore, it can visually show the frequency and range of multi-word items of the corpus, directly explain the vocabulary selection when constructing discourse, and deconstruct the discourse into components that convey Chinese images.

### 3. Result and Discussion

According to N-gram list, we can extract high frequency word list of President Xi' speech in the construction of Chinese image in the four sessions of CIIE. By adjusting the restrictions for the data this study keeps the form of group discussion. What's more, it is worth noting that Yang Huizhong (2002) emphasize the optimal linear study of word's co-occurrence number (N) in Corpus, should be less than 10. Therefore, the study sets up the range (R) =4, and N is more than 1 and less than 10, so word frequency (Freq) is more than 2, under the condition if  $N_1$  occurs more than twice,  $N_1$  will not be contained in the study. As a result, we get the following group discussions.

### 3.1 Group Discussion on N=2

Table 1: Two-gram list (N=2, R=4)

Number	Type	Freq
1.	China will	62
2.	the world	55
3.	opening up	49
4.	we will	35
5.	free trade	28
6.	China has	22
7.	the Chinese	19
8.	world economy	18
9.	economic globalization	15
10.	high quality	13
11.	reform and	13
12.	cooperation and	11
13.	development of	11
14.	foreign investment	11

There are two types of discourse constructed in the first group. In table 1, we can confirm the first type call “Subject” of an action, like "China will", "we will", "China has", and "the Chinese", to show the conductor’s stance, and to utilize “we” to create a close distance with the readers. Then by using the country name to emphasize the importance and great influence of the event. The second type belongs to related topics, such as "opening up", "reform", "high quality" and "world economy" should be taken into consideration as China improves its own high-quality reforms, and to transform an open economy development. Besides, the words "free trade", "economic globalization", "cooperation" and "foreign investment" are also contributing to explaining China's Image to participate as a global participant on world economy.

### 3.2 Group Discussion on N=3

Table 2: Three-gram list (N=3, R=4)

Number	Type	Freq
15.	pilot free trade	11
16.	free trade zones	10
17.	the multilateral trading	10
18.	belt and road	9
19.	the negative list	6
20.	china international import	5
21.	goods and services	5
22.	international import expo	5
23.	comprehensive economic partnership	4
24.	economic partnership rcep	4
25.	regional comprehensive economic	4

As Table 2 shows, "pilot free trade" and "free trade zones" provide significant information on experiment as well as trade areas. Meanwhile, for the international corporations, they will be affected by discourse information, and those who enjoy can have an interaction. Therefore, the discourse not only plays a role of practice to spread the majestic image of China's economic development, but also becomes the social practice to make the interactive effect of the behavior to attract foreign investment. The lemma "the multilateral trading", "comprehensive economic partnership" and "economic partnership" all indicate that China is establishing an international image of multilateral economic development, "the negative list", "goods and services" and "regional

comprehensive economic" represent the distinct efforts that China has made to build its global image, for example, the lemma item 18, "belt and road" is actually an important policy in the image construction in multi development.

### 3.3 Group Discussion on N=4, N=5,

Table 3: Four& Five-gram list (N=[4,5], R=4)

Number	Type	Freq
26.	build an open world	6
27.	community with a shared future	5
28.	and investment liberalization and facilitation	4
29.	the hainan free trade port	4
30.	a shared future for mankind	3
31.	china will take an active	3
32.	global industrial and supply chains	3
33.	high standard free trade agreements	3

Through Table 3, due to the large intersection of N=4 and N=5 word-item, the paper makes one group and divides into three categories. The first category is centered by the verbal clause, like "build an open world" and "china will take an active", which show the active image of China to participate in the international community. The second category is distinguished by Chinese concepts in nominal clause: "community with a shared future", "a shared future for mankind" and "global industrial and supply chains" choose the concept of community of shared future and the concept of global industrial supply chain when building China's image. The third category is the clause taking the semantic of conspicuous measures: "the Hainan free trade port" and "high standard free trade agreements" show the world that China's breakthroughs in economic development and the high-quality requirements for free trade agreements all shape the image of China actively participating in international economic development.

### 3.4 Group Discussion on N=[6,10]

Table 4: Six-ten gram list (N=[6,10], R=4)

Number	Type	Freq
34.	china will not stop its effort	3
35.	is important for all countries to	3
36.	lawful rights and interests of foreign	3
37.	let us work together to build	3
38.	more open inclusive balanced and beneficial	3
39.	speed up negotiations on a china eu	3
40.	trade and investment liberalization and facilitation and	3
41.	to conclude high standard free trade agreements with more	2

According to the practice process, when other conditions are fixed, the larger N increases, the higher the N-gram list repeats. Table 4 therefore covers word information with N values of 6 – 10. There are two types in this group, the first one is concentrated on the verbals in clause. According to the words 34, 37, 39 and 41, they all reveal a process from inside to outside, which can lead the feeling of readers, to the recipients who join with words and behaviors, and be deeply rooted in the people's hearts. The other is to create a fair and just national image for the participants in the

discourse construction, such as "lawful rights and interests of foreign", "balanced and beneficial" and "liberalization and facilitation " which are intended to create a fair and just international image.

#### 4. Summary

To sum up, this study conducts an empirical study on how to build a Chinese image in international discourse of President Xi's speech at the opening session of total four times on CIIE through the corpus method. By group discussion of N-gram, the English version of President Xi's speech covers a large number of economic topics and creates interactive practical sentences. The paper also find the words to make China actively participate in world economic development, promotes multilateral trade and cooperation, emphasize a community with a shared future, and create a fair and just international atmosphere. In addition, the research proves the proportional relationship between repetition of N and N-gram in the corpus application, and applies it to the research of International Discourse Construction and Chinese image, so as to provide reference value for related research.

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