

A Study of Diplomatic Discourse Strategies from the Perspective of the Attitude System

by Yuechen Zhou

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| Yuechen Zhou^{1,*} | Jingyan Zuo² | Huimin Jiang³ |

¹School of Foreign Languages,
Yunnan University, Kunming,
China

²School of Foreign Languages,
Yunnan University, Kunming,
China

³School of Foreign Languages,
Yunnan University, Kunming,
China

zhou.yuechen@qq.com

rissadmin@randwick

ABSTRACT

This study utilizes the “Spokesperson’s Remarks” section on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, focusing on over 100,000 words from the regular press conferences held by the Ministry in 2023. Drawing upon Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory as the analytical framework, this research conducts frequency statistics and functional discourse analysis on the categories of attitudinal resources in the selected corpus. Employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study aims to identify and investigate the discourse meanings conveyed through attitude resources in the news discourse of “regular press conferences,” revealing the linguistic characteristics of China’s diplomatic discourse. Furthermore, it seeks to summarize the significance and impact of diplomatic discourse on the construction of national image. The results indicate that the corpus is most rich in judgmental attitude resources, primarily realized through vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical expressions. This suggests that spokespersons mainly express attitudinal tendencies through factual statements and enhance national discourse power with precise language control, reflecting the objectivity of the discourse and contributing to the audience’s trust in the information.

KEYWORDS

Chinese Diplomatic Discourse; Regular Press Conference; Appraisal Theory; Attitude System; China’s International Communication

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic discourse refers to the language and speech acts used by diplomatic entities to express their international strategies and foreign policies during specific historical periods. This includes official national documents on diplomatic ideas or policies, speeches by leaders, treaties, agreements, communiqués, declarations, diplomatic negotiations, press conferences, and news briefings (Hu & Li, 2018). However, diplomatic discourse is not only the expression of positions and statements of views but also reflects a country’s strategic intentions, political concepts, and ideology. “When language serves the national interest, it becomes a part of international core competitiveness and an important manifestation of a nation’s soft and hard power” (Wen & Zhang, 2018). In the national discourse system, exploring how actors use language to construct national identity is gaining increasing attention. Research on diplomatic language has become a hot topic in the interdisciplinary field of international relations and linguistics. Diplomatic discourse research involves not only the study of language itself but also the deeper significance of the relationship between language and society, language and ideology, and language and power dynamics. The generation, dissemination, and reception of diplomatic discourse are inseparable from specific social, cultural, and historical contexts, and are closely related to human cognition. Based on this, studying Chinese diplomatic discourse is an important means of constructing China’s image in a global context. It is also a core representational form of Chinese

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