

Critical Discourse Analysis of President Xi's Speech on Teaching and Education

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Abstract—By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study analyses how President Xi is influenced by society and culture when delivering his speeches to advise citizens to respect teachers to ensure better quality education in China. After discussing the theoretical perspectives, the different issues presented in Xi's speeches regarding teachers' education, such as literacy for all, teachers' skills, patience among teachers, and technical skills, are identified and explored. Finally, the findings are compared with previous literature and the study concludes with reflections regarding conducting CDA in the field of teaching and education.

Index Terms—critical discourse analysis, President Xi, speech, teacher, education

I. INTRODUCTION

The principles and concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have proven useful in examining ways in which power is constructed rhetorically in educational spheres. By using a CDA approach, this study analyses how President Xi has been influenced by society and cultures when he delivered his speech to advise others to respect teachers and, in doing so, ensure better quality education. Although there is an English news report of Xi's speech, it should be recognized that my decision to examine the Chinese version stems from the fact that the president's audience heard the speech in this language. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate how the Chinese speech establishes an interpersonal negotiation between Xi Jinping and his audience. Furthermore, while contemporary analyses of public speeches have overtly acknowledged features of politico-linguistic discourse, they neglect to examine the ambiguous ideological underpinnings of certain types of language use as well as the power relations that are associated with them. In this context, Fairclough's frame for CDA proves valuable in bringing to light the various strata of investigation relevant for the present analysis of President Xi's speech.

II. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This study primarily uses Fairclough's approach to CDA. However, CDA can be conducted in a variety of ways, as demonstrated by the plethora of scholars who have mobilized differing schools of thought within their research. Selecting between various strategies depends on an expert's speculative approach and research design. These techniques are joined by a common interest in the discussion of vitality, character, and political economy or social changes in the general population (Rogers et al., 2005).

According to Titscher et al. (1998, p. 42), discourse can be defined in numerous ways, and it is approached differently depending on the discipline (e.g., linguistics or philosophy). This study's operational definition borrows from that of van Dijk (1997, p. 3). It also uses the notion of discourse as a text in a context that can be regarded as information that can be analysed empirically (Titscher et al., 1998, p. 44). The defining aspect of this definition is its conceptualization of discourse as a form of action and process, which indicates the breadth of the text when compared to plain text. Thus, in line with Fairclough (1989, p. 24), discourse is used here as a text encompassing all social interactions, in contrast to text that pertains to only a subset of the text.

As a multidisciplinary and problem-focused group of frameworks and approaches, CDA is a staple of educational research. One of CDA's fundamental tenets is that an investigation of meaning-making relates to an investigation of power in which most problems under discussion (particularly in the present context of globalization) are intimately linked to power, inequalities, and social justice. Hence, as emphasized by Lewis et al. (2007) and Gutierrez (2008), CDA holds a prominent status because it functions as a flexible instrument with which to investigate the complexities of discourse, many of which arise within a context characterized by worldwide inequalities regarding systems, practices, or educational settings. Ultimately, given the ever-changing nature of CDA's tendency for self-awareness, which itself arises from the integral link between discourse and its social surroundings, it is regarded as a practice that may promote novel perspectives, new forms of comprehension, and, promisingly, different behaviours.

Historically, CDA emerged in the 1990s. Influenced by etymological concerns over issues of vernacular power, CDA applies the linguistic examinations offered by Western Marxists. It draws on the insights of Foucault, Bourdieu, and Habermas, with a social semiotic point of view on language and all its premises. The Frankfurt School focused on the changing nature of free ventures and free will, its members concerning themselves with theories and frameworks that

attempted to identify the different conduct through which power and control are exerted.

According to Rogers (2004), Fairclough (2006), and Fairclough and Wodak (2008), Fairclough's framework is chiefly concerned with the "description, interpretation, and explanation" of the connections between texts and social activities at multiple levels (e.g., global, national, and local; McCullagh 2000, p. 39). The dialectical foundation of CDA is demonstrated by its alternation between linguistic and social analyses. Based on his identification of weakness in conventional conversational analysis (namely, the failure to acknowledge the social role of power), Fairclough (1992; 2003) sought to integrate the investigation of language's power distribution into CDA. As a socially conditional practice, Fairclough (1992; 2003) perceived that language shaped society, thereby prompting his investigation into the relationship between society and texts, discourse practices, (the procedures of producing, distributing, and consuming texts), and social practices, (the representations of discourse as ideology and power). It is noteworthy that Fairclough's conceptualization of text as both spoken and written language relied on the earlier work of Halliday (1978).

The discourse-historical approach is another major method in CDA. Similar to Fairclough, the discourse-historical approach holds that discourse is a reflection of social practice (Liu, 2008). The discourse-historical analysis is theoretically based on Bernstein's social linguistics and the social and critical theory of the Frankfurt School. This discourse analysis model includes two parts: triangulation based on context, and linguistic analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Triangulation primarily focuses on the intertextuality of different texts, text types, topics, and discourses, interpreting social problems within the political and historical contexts of society. To put it simply, linguistic analysis is the analysis of characteristics at the word or sentence levels.

Bakhtin's work on voice and social layering in correspondence, Hallidayan semantics, and the field of British social examinations are generally important and influential in CDA. The above has made valuable contributions to the fields of "rhetoric, text linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, and socio-cerebrum inquiries regarding cognitive science, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics" (Payrato, 2009, p. 163). Given CDA is essentially concerned with and impelled by profound social issues that it intends to grasp through speech examination more effectively, it is the ideal instrument with which to analyse President Xi's speech. The instrument is effective and straightforward to use in this examination because language coordinates associations among people and gatherings in the present day and outlines a basic perspective in world legislative issues. It is my conviction that there is a necessity for a fundamental awareness of language in administrative issues being basic to understanding the world (Fairclough, 1989). "Essential" is a term that has been analysed by various critics according to different genres of demand (Locke, 2004). Fairclough and Wodak (2008) indicated the different assortment of systems with different theoretical models. While they inquired about procedures and plans, they stated that they are united by an interest in the semiotic estimations of vitality, the identification of authoritative issues, and the political, financial, or social changes in people and society.

Essentially, discourse analysis unites phonetic examination with a social approach that explores how speech is used. As demonstrated by CDA, vernacular is not unbiased. Language imparts regard, addresses reality, and is involved in financial, social, religious, and political advancements (Rogers et al., 2005). Different business-related issues are fundamental in speech examinations and are frequently related to emancipatory arrangements that can unmask speeches and illuminate hidden administrative aspects.

Because CDA has its foundation on the instances of social correspondence that oppose etymological casings, it is particularly associated with power and the ideological issues of maintaining inequality in workplaces between the various social classes. As such, this is a significant methodological framework that investigates political trends that are routinely viewed as benefiting the wealthy. This discourse analysis hopes to expose the routinely obscure ideologies that accompany particular language uses and the relationships of vitality that underline them.

III. ANALYSIS OF XI'S SPEECH

The speech transcripts delivered by President Xi spanning from 2014 to 2020 were all obtained from the internet, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn> and www.edu.cn. All of these speeches were delivered in China on every year's Teacher's Day (10 September).

Personal pronouns have garnered considerable attention from many linguists. While personal pronouns are a factor relative to grammar, they are also recognized as one of the main cohesive devices that are related to the actual context. With the further study of personal pronouns, the references of personal pronouns have become a major research topic. The research of pronouns had not focused on the speaker and audience until the 1970s and 1980s (Wales, 1996, p. 52). The study of personal pronouns is more than a study of the social function of pronouns. The social function of a personal pronoun is closely related to the reasons for their use or somewhat a social function that such personal pronouns may imply in a text or discourse. The examples of data analysis of this study are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF DATA ANALYSIS

Grammar Item	Examples	Discursive Function
Use of pronouns	1. We need to focus on the professionalism of teachers.	1. In this context, “we” is used to refer to the country.
	2. We need to care for them.	2. In this case too, the “we” is used to refer to the entire country and the citizens.
	3. We need to pay them better.	3. In the third example, the term “we” refers to the government.
Active/passive voice shifts	1. Teachers have been the driving force of the development in the country. We should increase their incomes, especially those in the rural areas.	1. In this case, the President is acknowledging the role teachers are playing in providing quality-education in the country. As such, the President believes it is important to motivate them by raising their salaries.
	2. Students have continued being part of the pillar of development in the country. Because of this, we are undertaking the teachers’ mission to forge a dream team.	2. Here the President is urging the nation to continue supporting teachers for the good work they have always been doing.
Present continuous	1. I am urging all teachers to make a greater contribution to the educational cause.	1. The use of present continuous in his speech denotes what is currently happening in the education sector in the country. He is urging everyone to support teachers deliver good quality education.
Interpersonal function	1. We need to have greater respect for teachers.	1. The modality in this statement expresses the concern of respect given to teachers.
	2. We need teachers with sound ethics, great teaching skills and high energy level.	2. The modality in this statement emphasizes the importance of the role (moral) of teachers in education.

The current study focuses on the use of the personal pronoun “we” in the chosen corpus. Besides, the use of “we” is somewhat a discursive strategy to some degree that is useful for the speaker in controlling the discourse, and the understanding and application of “we” should be based on the social-historical context and the intention of the speaker (Adetunji, 2006).

The application of the personal pronoun “we” is highly flexible and variable in discourses. Wodak (2002; 2006) divided the use of “we” into the following seven categories according to the scale of referents and the use of the words of its kind, such as *our*, *us*, *ours*, *ourselves*, and so forth: (1) refers to the speaker and a single listener, such as *I* and *you*; (2) refers to the speaker and a single absentee, such as *I*, *he/she*; (3) refers to the speaker and multiple listeners, such as *I* and *you*; (4) refers to the speaker and multi-absentees, such as *I*, and *they*; (5) refers to the speaker, a single listener and a single absentee, such as *I*, *you* and *he/she*; (6) refers to the speaker, multi-listener and a single absentee, such as, *you* and *he/she*; (7) refers to the speaker, multi-listeners and multi-absentees, such as *I*, *you* and *they* (Wales, 1996, p. 52). Wodak’s classification of the personal pronoun “we” covers the use of the first, second, and third personal pronoun, which gives “we” a broader and more correct meaning. In Xi’s speeches, it was found that “we” appeared most frequently in all the text. The examples in which “we” was used can be seen when President Xi stated on 10 September 2014: “We need to focus on the professionalism of teachers”, “We need to care for them”, “We need to pay them better”; on 10 September 2018, “Our [we] education must cultivate socialist builders and successors as fundamental tasks”.

It was found that all the “we” use in the discourse not only refer to every teacher and educator but also refer to every student, parent, - every citizen in China. Those “we” use entail the first, second, and third personal pronouns. Based on an analysis and understanding of the text, the first person signifies President Xi, the second person refers to the teachers and educators on the scene (the direct listeners of the speech), and the third person indicates all the Chinese citizens (the absentees of the speech).

The function of the personal pronoun “we” in President Xi’s speeches is far beyond its traditional meaning. While the first personal pronoun, to some extent, stands for a sharing of responsibility between the speakers, the audience, and even the absentees, they can help the speaker to release their responsibility for the discourse. However, the first personal pronoun is characterized by its subjectivity, and the speech is open to the public and is certain to be objective. Therefore, all the uses of “we” are used in the quotations of this discourse, which makes the contents of this discourse more acceptable to all the audience.

Taking another example from Xi’s speeches from 2014 to 2021, the word “all” is used as an indefinite pronoun, which modifies the word “teachers”. Thus, we have “all teachers”. In effect, the simple word “teacher” can express the entire idea, yet the speaker uses the word “all” frequently in front of “teacher” to emphasize the teacher. The addition of “all”, on the one hand, can help the speaker to stress the teaching group; on the other hand, using this word can enforce a sense of absoluteness on the listeners.

In President Xi’s speeches, “all” modifies “teacher” and the phrase “all teachers” is often followed or collocated with such words as “should” and “need”. The speaker wants to highlight the responsibilities teachers must take for the public and the government. For example, in the speech on 10 September 2020, President Xi stresses that “the whole teaching group has to treat every student fairly and equally”, and “all teachers need to be qualified for teaching students a specific subject”. Therefore, it can be seen that “all” is used to make requirements for the teachers. This can show that the statements in Xi’s speech should and must be strictly complied with by the teachers.

Interestingly, it was found that there are several quotations used in Xi’s speeches, most of which are from ancient Chinese poems. For example, on 10 September 2014, “If we want to energize this country, we must have great respect for teachers”. The first saying, quoted at the beginning of his speech, is from the ancient Chinese philosopher, Xunzi.

By saying this, Xi emphasized the importance of teachers and called on the public to respect them, borrowing Xunzi's words to highlight the importance of teachers from a historical perspective. This reveals that teachers have a civic mission of contributing to education and forging a "Chinese dream—the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (China Daily, 2014).

Xi also often used several quotations from China's previous leaders in his speech. For example, on 10 September 2017's speech, he used Deng Xiaoping's words to point out the significance of teachers again: "Teachers are the key to a school's success in training personnel suited to the needs of our socialist construction; that is, its success in training workers who have both socialist consciousness and a good general education and who are highly developed morally, intellectually, and physically" (Deng, 1958). In this quotation, Deng pointed out the significance of teachers to education, and sentences such as this are common in Xi's speech. Indeed, Xi often uses previous leaders' words regarding the responsibilities or rights of teachers. When a speech requires a certain group to undertake some responsibilities, the speaker (i.e., President Xi) usually expects the audience to accept their opinions without scepticism. Given that most of the speeches were for teachers and educators in the university context, most of the contents were therefore concerned with what teachers and educators should or must do. Thus, to make it more acceptable to such an audience, President Xi quotes many famous sayings when setting objectives for the teachers. The application of such quotations can set the speaker outside of the speech and may give the listeners a pseudo image that these objectives have been recognized by the previous figure, and they are ordained to be respected and accomplished. Therefore, the requirements in his speech are considered reasonable and rational.

In summary, President Xi's speeches appealed to teaching groups, educational institutions, and the public to give teachers the most important role in national improvement. In his views on education, Xi emphasized the importance of teachers' responsibilities in learning and teaching. Throughout all the speeches about teaching and education from 2014 to 2020, Xi tends to use words with positive traits to exhibit his positive attitudes to the development of China's education. It is important to note that the president's speeches primarily deliver requirements to the national public and positively guide people's thoughts. Moreover, in his speech, it is not the subjunctive mood, but declarative sentences with several quotations that are commonly used to express the government's determination to develop national education. Lastly, Xi also uses several similar sentences consecutively and parallelism to intensify his view on teachers. Since China is a socialist country, and every national objective and goal is set by the National People's Congress, the underlying ideology and power relationships of the president's speech are closely related to national policies. That is, Xi's speech is a reflection of the ideologies of the Chinese government and tends to guide the Chinese citizens to form an opinion or establish an objective.

IV. THEMES AND FINDINGS

In addition to extensive data analysis, comprehensive fieldnotes are maintained for several reasons: first, to document reflections; second, to log analytical choices; and third, to gain insight into the development of social practices. According to Fairclough (1995), given discourse analysis' highly explanatory nature, field notes create the necessary system of accountability.

Accordingly, there are various themes that President Xi presented during his speeches about teaching and education on every year's Teacher's Day, which principally relate to his expectations of Chinese teachers. Even though President Xi's speeches also encompassed issues concerning the respect teachers deserve from the community, he also highlighted several aspects that teachers need to consider during their career, including literacy for all, teachers' skills, patience, and technical skills. Therefore, this segment examines these aspects individually, analysing their significance in the learning field.

Literacy for all. One student, one book, one teacher, and one pen can bring change to the world. The energy of one teacher is sufficient to ensure that a student changes their society and the entire world. Teachers' strength gives meaning to the future, and it ensures that society, through the students, works towards achieving a better life in the future.

Teachers' skills. Teachers and educators should have the capacity to tackle an assortment of issues regularly under a tight schedule. They must answer troublesome inquiries from students on the spot, tackle clashes between students, change lesson designs and manage issues among associates. He urged teachers to set high their bars and embrace technology. A decent educator realizes what assets to use to comprehend these sorts of inquiries rapidly and successfully. Instructors need to juggle various errands from educating and going to gatherings to lesson arranging and reviewing. Fulfilling these responsibilities in an opportune manner requires optimal physical condition and time administration. An additional test is that instructors are typically considered to be in charge of accomplishing more work than can fit into the hours of a customary workday. While the completion of some work at home is a virtual necessity, adept prioritization, and the proficient knowledge of limits—can enable an educator to determine which assignments can securely be set aside for a time to free up vital individual time.

Patience. All teachers need to be patient with their students and teach at a pace at which no student is left behind in their coursework. Teachers and educators need to exhibit tolerance, particularly when managing problematic classroom circumstances. They regularly need to clarify ideas in various circumstances and need to oversee students who may misbehave or have a difficult time in class. Managing guardians, associates, and superiors can likewise be challenging. An instructor must face every aspect of such issues with a quiet, proficient mien and watchful thoughtfulness, existing

apart from everything else. While a few people are normally more patient than others, the enthusiastic control and development that go into persistence can be learned and should be polished.

Technical skills. Teachers and educators must comprehend the material that they instruct. Advanced positions usually require high levels of aptitude, yet even instructors of extremely youthful children require considerable skills. It is not sufficient for a first-grade math educator to know how to perform basic number juggling, for instance. Accordingly, teachers should have a profound comprehension of numbers and numeric connections with a specific end goal to have the capacity to clarify the material intensively and responsively.

V. REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Before the initial reading of the Chinese script of President Xi Jinping's speeches about teachers and education, the main concern was that the availability of material suitable for analysis would be insufficient. However, after reading through the Chinese transcript of the speech, it was surprising to note the richness of the subject matter amenable to analysis and, in particular, the depth and detail generated by the framework, all of which was promising. It was particularly interesting to note that the initial reading of the Chinese transcript revealed a multitude of areas of concern, as well as several possibilities regarding the identification of areas of potential political bias. However, it is impossible to uncover any material pertinent to the checks and balances of the analyst's viewpoints.

Concerning the descriptive data derived from the verbal analysis, this was significant only in the sense that it enabled the researcher to gain an impression of the educational situation in China, particularly regarding how Chinese teachers are treated within their communities. To ensure that, a firm comprehension of these details was achieved, and Fairclough's CDA dimension was employed at this point. To be more specific, the CDA dimension was used to provide an account of the production and reception contexts. Regarding the examination of the descriptive data using the various available lenses of context, the following types of lenses were employed: firstly, the situational lens; and secondly, the intertextual lens.

Concerning the situational lens, the available data gathered from the Chinese transcript of President Xi Jinping's speech was examined from the perspective of time and space. To phrase this slightly differently, from the perspective of time, the knowledge of Chinese educational context was mobilized relevant to the point at which President Xi's speeches were delivered on every year's Teachers' Day. Here, a noteworthy issue was that of the assistance that certain Chinese teachers receive from the parents of students when operating educational institutions. Therefore, in terms of the situational context, it is supportive of these discourses concerning China, and it suggests that the community does lend support to teachers currently working in China.

To reinforce this approach to interpreting President Xi Jinping's speeches, the intertextual lens within its CDA dimensions was drawn on in this study. Since intertextuality is concerned with how the meaning of a text may be informed by other pertinent texts, the researcher spent time gathering relevant sources online. After a period of searching, several texts were identified as appropriate for the present analysis, and these were derived from an internet-based source. When viewed from the perspective of CDA, the intertextual analytical lens is utilized to reinforce the findings derived from the existing texts. Given this, it is crucial to investigate the text as comprehensively as possible, which entails that the text is read and analysed numerous times. Therefore, as part of the intertextual analysis, the elements of President Xi Jinping's speech was examined and compared with an investigation of how these elements were interrelated on several levels (in particular, at the level of the whole and the level of pairs and smaller groups of elements). As a result of this process of intertextual analysis paired with the above-mentioned situational analysis, the researcher could gain a deep sense of the part played by the community in assisting the practices of teachers. This is the case not only concerning the maintenance of discipline at school and in the domestic environment but also concerning how teachers fulfil other duties. In other words, the analytical procedure up to this point was a valuable means by which to identify the meanings of the teaching service, as well as the part played by the wider society, the general public, and local communities in facilitating the provision of effective educational services.

The final part of the analytical process was concerned with providing an explanation specifically relating to how the researcher generated a perspective from the findings based on the discourses arising from the various contexts under examination. Again, this could be facilitated by relying on the dimension offered by Fairclough, and the findings indicated that the issues of inclusion and exclusion are both integral aspects of the teaching profession in the Chinese context.

A defining feature of Fairclough's CDA strategy is to posit that how discourses emerge and are produced is not independent of power structures and power dynamics within a society; rather, the production and emergence of discourse is intimately linked to power, not only because it impacts power but also because it is impacted by power. In the present analysis, the researcher depended on the conceptual framework of Chinese education at both the descriptive and interpretive scales because this provided a way in which to draw inferences and findings from the obtained data. It is noteworthy that the point at which the utilized theory moved into irrelevance was at the theoretical framework explanation level of discursive postcolonialism. Significantly, discourse postcolonialism theory attempts to provide an account, an explanation, and an analysis of the connections that exist between teachers and their student's parents in a certain national context. Because of this consideration, the methodological utilization of CDA meant that it was not only possible to understand the findings, but that it was also possible to theorize about what had been found.

Finally, the study has some implications for theory and practice. The theoretical position is that language can be used to deliver an ideology and power, which is influenced by cultural context. To this end, it can be asserted that the present study has implications for the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. Also, it was evident in the study, for instance, that President Xi carefully and intentionally selected specific forms, words, and expressions, as well as quoted several ancient Chinese poems to make a specific impact on his listeners. The study, therefore, has implications for the field of discourse analysis by increasing interest in research on the concept of cultural context. It provides an impetus for further studies in considering culture and society, especially from the sociological point of view.

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