

# A Preliminary Study on the Construction of National Image from the Perspective of Artificial Intelligence

Gao Wangqi

(School of Interpreting & Translation Studies / Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China)

**ABSTRACT:** Against the backdrop of accelerating globalization and informatization, connections among countries have become increasingly close, and the construction and dissemination of national image have emerged as an important research topic. As a key medium of cross-cultural communication, translation constitutes one of the most common practical arenas for the dissemination of national image. The rapid rise of artificial intelligence technologies, represented by ChatGPT, has not only brought unprecedented convenience to translation practice but has also introduced new challenges that warrant further examination and response. Existing studies have largely focused on translation strategies and quality assessment of artificial intelligence, while paying relatively little attention to the role of technology itself in national image construction and its potential impact. From the perspective of artificial intelligence, this study takes the 2024 Chinese Government Work Report as its research object and explores the value orientations embedded in the application of AI technologies to national image discourse analysis. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, the study compares AI-generated corpora produced by tools such as ChatGPT and ERNIE Bot (Wenxin Yiyan) with the original text, examining potential differences in value cognition reflected in AI-generated content and their implications for national image construction. This paper aims to provide a preliminary exploratory pathway for the study of political discourse assisted by artificial intelligence and to offer useful references for future in-depth research on the possibilities of technology-empowered political communication.

**KEYWORDS-**Artificial intelligence, critical discourse analysis, national image; political discourse;

## I . INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of deepening globalization and the rapid iteration of information technologies, the construction of national image—an important component of a country's soft power—has become increasingly significant. With the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, their applications in information dissemination, public opinion guidance, and text analysis have continued to expand (Peng, 2018), offering new perspectives for research on national image construction. Regarding studies on discourse analysis

and national image construction, scholars have conducted extensive investigations across different dimensions and genres (Zhuang & Chen, 2024; Zhang, 2022; Liu & Mao, 2020). In recent years, AI technologies represented by ChatGPT have risen rapidly, bringing revolutionary changes to translation practice. These technologies have not only significantly improved translation efficiency but have also, to some extent, enhanced translation quality. However, while injecting new momentum into the field of translation, AI technologies have also introduced potential problems such as value bias, misinformation, and privacy leakage (Kalla et al., 2023). At present, some relevant studies focus mainly on the technical aspects of AI translation, such as translation strategies and linguistic quality assessment (Wen & Tian, 2024), as well as discourse analysis approaches assisted by large language models (Yu et al., 2024). Although a small number of domestic studies have addressed ethical issues related to AI-empowered translation (Yu & Guo, 2024; Wang & Zhang, 2024; Wu & Chen, 2023), relatively little attention has been paid to the deeper question of how AI technologies shape national image through discourse generation and reformulation. With the widespread application of AI technologies, their potential impact on political communication and national image construction urgently calls for greater scholarly attention. The *Government Work Report* is an important component of China's distinctive external discourse system. As a key political document of China, the translation of the *Report* plays an extremely important role in "accelerating the construction of China's discourse and narrative systems, telling China's stories well, and effectively communicating China's voice" (Zhang et al., 2023: 49). From the perspective of artificial intelligence, this study introduces the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and takes the *2024 Government Work Report* as its corpus to explore the influence of AI on national image construction, with the aim of providing new insights for future theoretical research and practical applications.

## II. DISCOURSE STUDIES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary research approach that focuses on the relationship between language, power, and ideology. With natural language processing (NLP) at its core, artificial intelligence is opening up new pathways for the study of political discourse. AI is not only capable of efficiently analyzing large-scale corpora to extract emotional tendencies and semantic relations, but also able to generate high-quality, context-appropriate texts and support cross-linguistic comparative analysis. In this way, AI facilitates the identification of meaning shifts in translation and their impact on international communication.

### (1) Theoretical Foundations of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary research perspective and an emerging branch of modern linguistic studies. It aims to uncover the intrinsic connections among discourse, power, and ideology, thereby helping scholars gain a deeper understanding of how language interacts with social processes, social structures, and social change. As a result, CDA has been integrated with disciplines such as anthropology, economics, geography, health studies, and media studies (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). The theoretical foundations of CDA are primarily derived from the work of scholars such as Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak.

CDA is mainly grounded in two major theoretical traditions: post-structuralism and neo-Marxism. Post-structuralism, which emerged in continental Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century as a critique or revision of structuralism, emphasizes the interpretation of textual meaning and views meaning as open, unstable, and capable of deconstructing tradition and power. Because post-structuralism focuses both on discursive practices and critical perspectives, it has become an important theoretical source of CDA. During this period, Foucault's theory of discourse analysis exerted a profound influence on the development of CDA. Neo-Marxism, by contrast, refers to a range of theoretical trends that emerged in the twentieth century through the integration of cultural interpretation, social structure theories, and Marxist critical theory. Neo-Marxism reinterprets concepts of power and ideology and has played a significant role in discourse analysis research. Due to differences in theoretical backgrounds, discourse analysis has developed three major schools: the dialectical-relational approach, the socio-cognitive approach, and the discourse-historical approach, represented respectively by Fairclough, van Dijk, and Foucault. Discourse analysis may adopt a variety of analytical methods, including systemic functional grammar analysis, contextual analysis, ethnographic analysis, pragmatic analysis, metaphor analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and corpus-based analysis (Xin, 2020: 110–115).

## **(2) Research on Political Discourse**

The Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized the need to “accelerate the construction of China’s discourse and narrative systems, comprehensively enhance international communication capacity, and form international discourse power commensurate with China’s comprehensive national strength and international status.” Accordingly, the translation and dissemination of China’s distinctive external discourse are of great strategic significance. The outward translation of Chinese political discourse serves as an important channel through which the Party and the state communicate major policies and principles to the international community (Zhang & Zhang, 2024: 61–62). A search of the CNKI database using the keyword “political discourse research,” with the discipline limited to “Foreign Languages and Literature” and the source category restricted to “CSSCI,” yields 42 relevant publications. These studies mainly focus on the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, translation strategies, and metaphor studies in political discourse. In recent years, corpus-based methods have become increasingly popular, providing technical support for the analysis of large-scale textual data. However, to date, few studies have examined the role of artificial intelligence itself in political discourse research.

## **(3) The Application Value of Artificial Intelligence in Political Discourse Research**

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, AI technologies centered on natural language processing (NLP) have been increasingly applied in linguistics, communication studies, and political science. AI’s powerful computational capacity, deep learning models, and large-scale corpus analysis capabilities provide political discourse research with new perspectives and methodologies. AI has significantly facilitated large-scale corpus analysis. In traditional discourse studies, researchers typically need to invest substantial time and effort in manual

textual analysis. By contrast, AI-based text mining tools such as ChatGPT and Wenxin Yiyan can efficiently process large corpora and reveal core themes and emotional tendencies in discourse through techniques such as sentiment analysis, keyword extraction, and semantic relation mining (Yu et al., 2024). Moreover, AI possesses strong text-generation capabilities, enabling it to simulate human linguistic styles and produce high-quality, context-appropriate texts. This feature opens up new directions for political discourse research. For example, ChatGPT can generate texts resembling official reports based on input corpora and, to some extent, reflect the technology's understanding of discourse construction. Such generative capabilities not only provide researchers with opportunities for restatement and reinterpretation of discourse texts, but also enable comparative analysis. Researchers may compare AI-generated content with original texts to examine potential biases or limitations in technological discourse representation. AI also supports cross-linguistic discourse research. In the context of globalization, meaning shifts often occur during translation between languages, and such shifts may affect target audiences' perceptions of national image. Through AI-powered translation functions, researchers can rapidly generate multilingual texts and conduct comparative analyses to identify linguistic differences and their impact on discourse meaning. For instance, in analyzing translations of the *Government Work Report*, researchers may examine whether value perceptions or cultural logics differ between the original text and AI-generated translations.

Originating from a grassroots-initiated “Great Translation Movement” on domestic and international social media platforms in China in 2022, the movement aimed to translate Chinese online discourse—including official media reports, personal comments, and discussions of trending events—for global audiences, particularly readers in major Western language communities such as English and French. By translating Chinese content into foreign languages, the movement directly influenced international public opinion. On the one hand, some translated materials attracted international attention to domestic Chinese discourse and enhanced external understanding of China's social culture and public opinion ecology; on the other hand, certain sensitive or selectively extracted content led to controversy and even misunderstanding. The anonymity and diversity characterizing the movement made it difficult for audiences to assess the authority of the translated content, yet its communicative impact cannot be overlooked. It reflects new features of information dissemination in the era of globalization, demonstrating the power of ordinary individuals in cross-cultural communication through technological means and highlighting the role of social media in shaping international public opinion. The movement underscores the crucial role of language and culture in the dissemination of national image, particularly within a multipolar global communication landscape. Through translation, information once confined to specific linguistic communities can enter the global arena and exert a direct influence on international public opinion. The implications of the Great Translation Movement are multifaceted. At the national level, greater attention should be paid to initiative and agency in cross-cultural communication, especially in the design of translation and international communication strategies, in order to avoid passive positioning. As an essential tool of cross-cultural communication, translation requires a high degree of professionalism and responsibility to ensure accuracy and fairness. The movement also serves as a reminder that technological empowerment has elevated the role of individuals in information dissemination. Countries must therefore confront both the challenges and opportunities brought about by

technological change and promote the healthy development of global communication.

### III. REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIONAL IMAGE IN THE 2024 GOVERNMENT WORK REPORT: AN ANALYSIS OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies in the field of language generation, large language models represented by ChatGPT have gradually attracted scholarly attention for their performance in translation and text-generation tasks. Taking the 2024 Government Work Report of China as the corpus, this study compares AI-generated content with the original text to analyze the core themes and characteristics of national image representation. It further explores the application value of AI tools in political discourse analysis and their potential impact on the dissemination of national image.

#### (1) Corpus Construction: A Comparison Between AI-Generated Texts and the Original

As an important text in China's domestic and external political discourse, the *2024 Government Work Report* systematically presents the country's policy positions and development achievements across economic, social, and cultural domains, reflecting a strong intention to shape national image. In this study, several key paragraphs from the Report were selected as research samples. English translations were generated using ChatGPT and Wenxin Yilan to form a parallel corpus alongside the original text, enabling an examination of how different AI-generated versions reflect specific features of national image as well as potential biases. The original Chinese text was input into the AI models with a consistent instruction—namely, "Please translate the following sentence into English"—to generate corresponding English outputs. These AI-generated translations were then compared with an authoritative reference translation. Subsequently, the implicit values and ideological elements embedded in the texts were interpreted to reveal the influence of AI-generated content on national image construction. The comparison is illustrated in the table below.

Original Text	Reference Translation	ChatGPT-40	Wenxin Yilan
我们要坚持贯彻新时代党解决台湾问题的总体方略，坚持一个中国原则和“九二共识”，坚决反对“台独”分裂和外来干涉，推动两岸关系和平发展，坚定不移推进	We will implement our Party's overall policy for the new era on resolving the Taiwan question, stay committed to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, and resolutely oppose separatist activities aimed at "Taiwan independence" and external interference. We will	We must remain committed to implementing the Party's overall strategy for resolving the Taiwan issue in the new era, uphold the One-China principle and the "1992 Consensus," resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence" separatism and foreign interference, and promote the peaceful	We must adhere to and implement the overall strategy of the Party for resolving issues relating to Taiwan in the new era, uphold the One-China Principle and the "1992 Consensus," resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence" separatism and external interference,

祖国统一大业， 维护中华民族 根本利益。	promote the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, be firm in advancing the cause of China's reunification, and uphold the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.	development of cross-strait relations, steadfastly advance the great cause of national reunification, and safeguard the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.	promote peaceful development of cross-strait relations, steadfastly advance the great cause of reunification of the motherland, and safeguard the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.
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## (2) Restatement and Interpretation of the Report by ChatGPT and Wenxin Yiyan

First, with regard to the wording used to refer to the Taiwan issue, ChatGPT translates “台湾问题” as “*the Taiwan issue*”, while Wenxin Yiyan adopts “*issues relating to Taiwan*”, whereas the reference translation uses “*the Taiwan question*.” In the postcolonial context, “the Taiwan question” has become a highly politicized term, revealing how ideological forces may influence translation practices through lexical choices (Lu, 2018: 83). The divergence between the AI-generated versions and the reference translation mainly lies in the rendering of the word “问题.” According to the *Collins Dictionary*, *issue* refers to a subject that is controversial and under debate (“An issue is an important subject that people are arguing about or discussing”), whereas *question* is relatively more neutral, denoting a matter that requires consideration or resolution (“A question is a problem, matter, or point which needs to be considered”). This distinction suggests that ChatGPT’s translation implicitly frames the Taiwan issue as a controversial matter open to negotiation, thereby exhibiting a discernible political inclination. To further examine ChatGPT’s stance, the author posed a follow-up question: “Why did you translate ‘台湾问题’ as ‘the Taiwan issue’ rather than ‘the Taiwan question’?” ChatGPT responded that the choice between “*Taiwan issue*” and “*Taiwan question*” depends on context and target audience: “*question*” is commonly used in formal diplomatic contexts, emphasizing the historical gravity and seriousness of the matter and thus suited to official government documents, whereas “*issue*” is considered more neutral and is frequently used in academic research or media discourse, aligning more closely with the linguistic habits of international readers. This response indicates that AI is capable, to some extent, of perceiving subtle differences in diplomatic attitudes between China and Western countries. Nevertheless, it ultimately adopts a more Western-oriented position and categorizes *issue* as a neutral expression. This finding suggests that translators should remain vigilant when using AI-assisted translation, particularly with politically sensitive expressions. Since AI models are largely trained on English-language corpora, which tend to reflect Western perspectives, their outputs may carry implicit political biases. By contrast, although Wenxin Yiyan also employs the term *issue*, its translation strategy is more ambiguous and adopts a relatively neutral stance. Second, regarding the sentence opposing “Taiwan independence” separatism and external interference, ChatGPT and Wenxin Yiyan adopt different translation strategies. Wenxin Yiyan renders the phrase as “*resolutely oppose ‘Taiwan independence’ separatism and external interference*,” a formulation that more closely aligns with established diplomatic discourse conventions. In particular, “*external interference*”

demonstrates greater consistency with policy discourse than ChatGPT's use of "*foreign interference*."

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies in the fields of language generation and translation has provided new research perspectives and technical tools for the construction and dissemination of national image. Through an analysis of AI-generated content related to the Taiwan issue in the *2024 Government Work Report*, this study not only demonstrates the strong potential of AI translation technologies but also reveals their limitations and potential impacts in specific political contexts. A comparative analysis of translations produced by ChatGPT and Wenxin Yiyan indicates that AI-generated content may be influenced by training data and algorithmic preferences in terms of lexical choice and stylistic formulation. For instance, ChatGPT's selection between "*Taiwan issue*" and "*Taiwan question*," as well as its adaptation of diplomatic expressions to Western and Chinese communicative contexts, reflects the model's sensitivity to target-language conventions and cultural logics, while simultaneously revealing potential value-oriented biases. Similarly, Wenxin Yiyan's preference for formulations closer to official discourse when translating references to "*Taiwan independence*" separatism and external interference demonstrates its stronger alignment with domestic political discourse conventions. Such comparative findings highlight the potential risks of AI-assisted translation in the dissemination of national discourse, as model-generated content may trigger misunderstanding or controversy in international communication. The application value and limitations of AI translation in the representation of national image therefore merit further in-depth exploration. On the one hand, AI facilitates the efficient processing of large volumes of text and provides technical support for the multilingual dissemination of political discourse. On the other hand, the ideological tendencies and semantic shifts embedded in AI-generated content require careful scrutiny and control by human translators. This duality once again underscores the "double-edged sword" nature of AI-assisted translation: while it can simplify complex translation tasks, professional human judgment remains indispensable. This study offers important insights for future research at the intersection of artificial intelligence and political discourse. Scholars should pay greater attention to the implicit biases that may emerge in AI-assisted translation practices, particularly in politically sensitive contexts. In practical applications, AI-generated content should be evaluated in light of the cultural backgrounds and linguistic habits of target audiences, with human post-editing employed to ensure effective and responsible communication. The use of AI should be integrated into broader communication strategies so that its technological advantages can be leveraged while potential risks are mitigated, thereby better serving the strategic goals of national image construction and international communication. As AI technologies continue to advance, their potential in discourse generation and analysis will be further unleashed. Researchers and practitioners should strive to balance technological innovation with humanistic considerations, ensuring that the application of AI in political communication moves toward greater fairness and efficiency, and contributes more substantially to the enhancement of national discourse power and the healthy development of global communication. This study also has certain limitations. The sample size is relatively small and therefore lacks representativeness, making it difficult to draw generalizable conclusions.

Moreover, the discourse analysis remains somewhat partial. Future research may adopt corpus-based approaches to compare AI-generated translations with authoritative reference translations, in order to examine whether AI exhibits discernible political tendencies and whether different AI systems demonstrate systematic differences in this regard.

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