Constructing and Disseminating the Discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-Win” in the Context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”

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Abstract. In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China should take the opportunity to ease the tension between China and the Philippines, constructing and disseminating the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win”. To achieve this goal, this paper proposes three implementation approaches, that is, to expand China-Philippines cooperation at governmental and non-governmental level, to construct the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse at ideological and linguistic level, and to disseminate the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse at Chinese, Philippine and international level.

1. Introduction

Since the South China Sea disputes between China and the Philippines, how to get bilateral relations back onto the track of sound development has been an significant concern in China. Cheerfully, with the proposal of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China embrace a great opportunity to clear obstacles in China-Philippines ties and promote China-Philippines cooperative development. Under this background, more and more researches on China-Philippines and “the Belt and Road Initiative” has been conducted by domestic researchers. Three categories are summarized by the author of this paper. The first category is related to Philippine media’s construction of China’s image. Many researchers, such as Zhou Yang [1], Ye Qing [2], Zang Yaru [3], Zhang Jixing [4], analyzed how Philippine mainstream media construct China’s image at overall-framework level from the perspective of framework theory. Some researchers, such as Li Dexia [5], Mao Jiawu et al. [6], analyzed how Philippine mainstream media construct China’s image through discourse connotation from the perspective of discourse analysis. Still, some researchers, such as Lin Kaicheng [7], Mao Jiawu et al. [6], analyzed how Philippine Chinese-language media construct China’s positive image through discourse guidance. The second category is related to China-Philippines cooperation pathes. Researchers explored the pathes of China-Philippines cooperation from various perspectives. Among them, Wu Jiewei [8] believed that China-Philippines cooperation will surely be enhanced in the future as long as China acts in a better, deeper and more regulated way. Lin Yongxin [9] pointed out that, under “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China and the Philippines should carry out cooperation on policy dialogue, infrastructure and industrial park construction, ocean affairs, risk assessment, etc. Lu Jiaqi [10] and Qi Huagao [11] focused on the opportunities and obstacles of China-Philippines joint development in the South China Sea. The third category is related to the construction of “the Belt and Road Initiative” discourse system. Researchers illustrated the necessity, path and paradigm of constructing “the Belt and Road Initiative” discourse system. Among them, Jia Wenshan [12] argued that it is very urgent to construct an internationally applicable theoretical framework of “a community with a shared future for mankind” based on the principle of seeking truth from facts and inspired by the practice of “the Belt and Road” project. According to Jin Miao [13], the neo-cosmopolitanism with the concept of “a community with a shared future for mankind” as its core can serve as an important logical basis and theoretical resource for constructing “the Belt and Road Initiative” global discourse from different perspectives such as academic discourse, political discourse, folk discourse, media
discourse and enterprise discourse. Shao Peiren et al. [14] advocated that China should, based on the concept of “building a community with a shared future for mankind” and the holistic philosophy of human civilization, reconstruct “the Belt and Road Initiative” global discourse and reinterpret the relationship between China and the world. Liu Qian et al. [15] suggest three methods for constructing “the Belt and Road Initiative” global discourse based on survey: spreading the story of China through educational exchanges, diversifying the channels of China’s international dissemination and improving the influence of China’s international discourse by intensifying the dissemination of Chinese value.

However, reviewing the above researches, several problems can be found. First, “the Belt and Road Initiative” discourse system is still not complete, lacking the theoretical generalization of the practice achievements of “the Belt and Road” project. Second, “the Belt and Road Initiative” discourse system is still not subdivided, lacking the specific description of the relationship between China and a specific neighboring nation. Third, there is still a lack of research on promoting China-Philippines joint development for mutual benefit through constructing and disseminating the corresponding discourse under “the Belt and Road Initiative”. In view of this, an attempt is made in this paper, based on integrating the theories of linguistics and communication, to probe into the construction and dissemination of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse in the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”. More specifically, three implementation approaches, namely expanding China-Philippines cooperation, constructing the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, disseminating the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, are to be described.

2. Expanding China-Philippines Cooperation

In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China and the Philippines should expand cooperation at governmental and non-governmental level.

2.1 At Governmental Level

The Chinese government should initatively put disputes aside and seek cooperation with the Philippine government in different arenas under “the Belt and Road Initiative”.

First, policy cooperation: The Chinese government should cooperate with the Philippine government to formulate the general implementation scheme for China and the Philippines jointly constructing “the Belt and Road Initiative”, as well as the specific policies for deepening China-Philippines exchange and cooperation in various fields.

Second, maritime security cooperation: The Chinese government should cooperate with the Philippine government to fight against maritime crimes, explore new models for managing maritime disputes and strengthening maritime cooperation, and cooperate in the fields of fishery, oil and gas, etc. within the framework of “the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea”.

Third, infrastructure construction cooperation: The Chinese government should provide a full range of support for the infrastructure development and construction in the Philippines, helping the Philippine government improve the competence in guaranteeing the prosperity of domestic economy and the quality of people’s lives on the basis of various well-equipped infrastructure in the Philippines.

Fourth, economic and trade cooperation: The Chinese government should cooperate with the Philippine government to center on the joint development of agriculture, fishery, oil and gas, communication, finance, and tourism under the guidance of the three-step strategy, namely trade facilitation, economic and technical cooperation and industrial park construction.

Fifth, cultural and educational cooperation: The Chinese government should cooperate with the Philippine government to organize diversified cultural exchange activities and launch various educational exchange projects so as to deepen mutual understanding between the two nations and enhance friendship between the two nations.
2.2 At Non-Governmental Level

The Chinese government should encourage the non-governmental groups to positively respond to national policies and seek cooperation with the Philippine non-governmental groups in different arenas under “the Belt and Road Initiative”.

First, economic cooperation: The Chinese government should encourage the non-governmental small, medium-sized and large-scale enterprises in China to cooperate with those in the Philippines to conduct research, develop production and provide service by making full use of their flexibility, so as to ensure the non-governmental economic collaboration and growth, and ultimately help build the economic cooperation relationship between the two nations with mutual benefit as the core.

Second, cultural cooperation: The Chinese government should encourage the Chinese non-governmental cultural organizations and unions in China to cooperate with those in the Philippines to organize colorful cultural exchange activities by making full use of their specialities, so as to enrich the cultural communication contents and forms, and ultimately help build the cultural cooperation relationship between the two nations with mutual understanding as the core.

Third, environmental protection cooperation: The Chinese government should encourage the Chinese non-governmental environmental protection organizations and associations in China to cooperate with those in the Philippines to launch thought-provoking environmental protection campaigns by making full use of their influence, so as to enhance the system establishment and awareness cultivation of environmental protection, and ultimately help build the environmental protection cooperation relationship between the two nations with co-developing green civilization as the core.

Fourth, public welfare cooperation: The Chinese government should encourage the Chinese non-governmental public welfare organizations and institutions in China to cooperate with those in the Philippines to sponsor supportive public welfare projects by making full use of their resources, so as to enlarge the beneficiary scope and number of public welfare, and ultimately help build the public welfare cooperation relationship between the two nations with co-creating social happiness as the core.

3. Constructing “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-Win” Discourse

In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China should construct the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” at ideological and linguistic level.

3.1 At Ideological Level

China should comprehensively and systematically construct the ideological elements in the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” under “the Belt and Road Initiative”.

First, construction of China’s image of as a civilized and prosperous nation: To construct the ideological elements in the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should show the world its long civilized tradition of making friends with its neighbors as a civilized nation, and show the world its solid foundation of building a cooperative and win-win relationship with the Philippines as a prosperous nation.

Second, construction of “a community with a shared future” concept within the framework of “the Belt and Road Initiative”: To construct the ideological elements in the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should show the world what “the Belt and Road Initiative” propose is to share responsibilities, to share obligations, to share rights, to share interests, to establish a just and peaceful regional order, and to form a community with a shared future for development and prosperity.

Third, construction of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” prospect: To construct the ideological elements in “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should show the world that China is competent to work together with the Philippines to find common interests through conversation, maximize common interests through cooperation, and share common interests through coordination and ultimately create win-win prospect.
3.2 At Linguistic Level

China should comprehensively and systematically construct the linguistic elements in the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” under “the Belt and Road Initiative”.

First, construction of discourse subjects: To construct the linguistic elements in the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should avoid selecting the discourse subjects with distorted intentions, and intentionally invite the discourse subjects in a balanced way. Specifically, for one thing, the proportion of the invited subjects should be relatively balanced, covering the government officials, scholars and researchers, ordinary people in China, the Philippines and international community; for another, the frequency of discourses from different subjects should be relatively balanced. Only in this way, can the objectivity and impartiality of discourse subjects be ensured.

Secondly, construction of discourse contents: To construct the linguistic elements in the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should avoid selecting the discourse contents of defaming China and stirring up trouble in China-Philippines relations, and intentionally present the description of “the Belt and Road Initiative” laying a good foundation for China-Philippines cooperation, China and the Philippines determining to put disputes aside and seek cooperation with mutual trust, China and the Philippines achieve tangible results through cooperation. Only in this way, can the positivity and rightness of discourse contents be ensured.

Thirdly, construction of discourse forms: To construct the linguistic elements in the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse, China should avoid selecting the discourse forms like word, phrase, metaphor, repetition, presupposition, implication, fuzziness, etc., with derogatory and satirical connotations, and intentionally use the discourse forms praising peace, friendship, improvement, stability, openness, inclusiveness, cooperation, communication, mutual trust and common interest. Only in this way, can the commendation and encouragement of discourse forms be ensured.

4. Disseminating “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-Win” Discourse

In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China should disseminate the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” at Chinese, Philippine and international level.

4.1 At Chinese Level

China should fully utilize and develop diversified channels in China to disseminate the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win”.

First, dissemination via China’s foreign-oriented publicity media: China should fully develop the dissemination channels and methods of foreign-oriented publicity media. In addition to disseminating the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” course officially and formally on traditional media, China should also disseminate the relevant discourses by posting, commenting and live broadcasting on new media. Moreover, China should keep a close eye on the discourses on foreign media, and rebuts their negative discourses promptly. Furthermore, China should innovate the external expression techniques, building a variety of wonderful and refined China-Philippines story carriers. What’s more, China should discover and write more stories of ordinary people, depicting their true feelings and understanding of China-Philippines friendship.

Second, dissemination via Chinese people: China should fully mobilize its people to grasp various opportunities and utilize different channels to disseminate positive discourses and correct negative discourses about China, the Philippines and “the Belt and Road Initiative”, including chatting, debating, posting, commenting on social media, communicating during foreign-related contact when at work, in leisure time, as well as speaking in international activities.

Third, dissemination via foreigners coming to China: China should fully stimulate the interest of
foreigners coming to China in disseminating the story of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win”, by making them deeply feel the inclusiveness and brilliance of Chinese culture, and truly understand the firm resolution and practical actions of China’s making friends with the Philippines in the real-China surroundings and thus voluntarily act as objective disseminators of the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse.

4.2 At Philippine Level

China should fully utilize and develop diversified channels in the Philippines to disseminate the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win”.

First, dissemination via Philippine mainstream media: China should initiatively communicate with Philippine mainstream media, telling them China’s good intention and strong determination for building “the Belt and Road” and boosting China-Philippines ties, so as to get their support for valuing the concept of China-Philippines enhancing friendship and cooperation for win-win, thus voicing and disseminating the positive discourses domestically and internationally.

Second, dissemination via media runned by Filipino Chinese: China should extremely cherish the support of Filipino Chinese for promoting China-Philippines friendship by providing them with necessary information and help, so as to let them play an important role in correcting negative discourses and delivering positive discourses in the Philippines through abundant factual evidences, thus acting as truthful disseminators of the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse.

Third, dissemination via Philippine people: China should comprehensively publicize the concept of China-Philippines win-win under “the Belt and Road Initiatives” through various channels among Philippine people, showing them the tangible improvement of their lives brought by China-Philippines cooperation, so as to get their support for promoting China-Philippines cooperation, thus consciously disseminating the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse.

4.3 At International Level

China should fully utilize and develop diversified channels in international community to disseminate the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win”.

First, dissemination via international conferences, forums and activities: China’s official and non-official representatives should initiatively take every opportunity to tell China-Philippines story by interpreting the China-Philippines cooperation concept and demonstrating the China-Philippines cooperation achievement as well as disseminate the discourse of China maintaining friendship with its neighboring nations, and the discourse of China and the Philippines putting disputes aside and creating prosperous future when participating in international conferences, forums and activities.

Second, dissemination via international media: China should initiatively demonstrate various factual evidences of China-Philippines friendship and cooperation under “the Belt and Road Initiative” in the international community, making the well-known media in the world comprehensively and correctly understand the China-Philippines story, and thus objectively and positively disseminate the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse in international community.

Third, dissemination via people in international community: China should initiatively tell people in international community a variety of true and amazing China-Philippines stories through both official and non-official channels, inspiring their positive thought about China-Philippines relations and letting them know the significance of China-Philippines cooperation, and thus voluntarily act as objective disseminators of the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse.

5. Conclusion

In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, how China and the Philippines make a joint effort toward cooperative development has emerged as an important concern for researchers. To achieve the
desired effect, this paper, integrating the theories of linguistics and communication, proposes a strategy of constructing and disseminating the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” and further elaborated the three concrete implementation approaches, that is, to expand China-Philippines cooperation at governmental and non-governmental level, to construct the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse at ideological and linguistic level, and to disseminate the “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” discourse at Chinese, Philippine and international level. It is hoped that by implementing the approaches, the discourse of “China-Philippines Cooperation for Win-win” can be successfully constructed and disseminated. And it is also expected that this paper will be of great value to the future researches on building good neighboring relationship between China and other nations with the help of the positive discourse system in the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”.

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