CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF HUAWEI ON TWITTER

Zheng qiqi

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China

ABSTRACT

Comparing with traditional media, online social media seem to provide more opportunities for people to speak out their ideas. Twitter integrates the whole world users in the platform, so that users from different places can exchange their views in the Internet. These functions own the decentralized feature, which is expected to change the original power structure in international communication. Huawei is an outstanding representative of Chinese company whose texts to some extent illustrate the overseas public 's evaluation of Chinese image.

On that basis, this study adopts the theory of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and analyzes the ways of Huawei discourse on Twitter. In this way, the current paper tries to investigate the production, distribution and consumption of Huawei discourse on Twitter. Meanwhile, this dissertation also attempts to discuss the situation of the construction and dissolution of the power structure behind social media in the new media era.

KEYWORDS

Twitter, Huawei, CDA theory, Mengwanzhou, Renzhengfei

1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged in current society that people are easier to receive information from all different others around the word compared to the past. Especially nowadays, thanks to the Internet, some online media such as Facebook and twitter can display users' ideas from every corner of the word. Additionally, social media seems to give everyone right to express their thoughts equally because of decentralized network.

However, reviewing literature about mass media reveals that there is always existing power construe behind the media. Fairclough (2003) argues that ideology is a complicated situation in the media discourse for it is flexible in the discourse. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether ideology and power construe exist in social media in a theoretical analysis. On that basis, a theory is needed for the investigation of power and ideology behind mass media. As a result, this paper adapts the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which was came up by Fairclough. He(Fairclough ,2003) emphasizes the media discourse research could divided into three dimensions. The first dimension is text analysis; the second dimension considers discursive practice, while the third-dimension regards social practice as a deeper study. This article aims to study how the image of Chinese high technology company Huawei was represented through the discourse of international social media Twitter.

Various values are shaped by the mass media. Fairclough (2003) stressed that the institutions such as newspaper, spread the ideology by using the information to influence the social view. The purpose of the research is to explore the ideology and power behind Twitter by applying CDA theory to Huawei discourse on Twitter.

The context behind this paper is a series of events about Huawei. In December of 2018, Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada for connecting business dealing with Iran. Meng is chief financial officer of Huawei, China's largest telecommunications supplier（Kim,2018）. In 2019，the US government baned Huawei for national security, which was accused by China that Washington tried to halt the rise of Chinese high technology company (Sean,2020).

Although this heat debt still keeps going, the events arise plenty of attentions all the world. The ideological divides between China and America are obvious, so that ideology could be exhibited in discussion on Twitter. The objectives of the present study are to trace power relations and ideology through the users' text in the certain online platform. The following part will explain the methodology of theory and way of collecting the data. Following that, the data will be analyzed in three dimensions with third part, and after that the final part is the conclusion of finding of Huawei discourse on Twitter.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Theoretical consideration

This paper accepts Fairclough's model of CDA involving three dimensions, text, discursive discourse and social practices to analysis media. However, when CDA theory was presented to analysis newspapers and television in 1996, some deeper investigations are not suitable in social media nowadays(Hart, 2013). As a result, this part will explain the specific theoretical consideration in three dimensions.

Text analysis, according to Fairclough, there are four main ways. Text on twitter are made by various users. So it is not fixed habit of grammar, cohesion, and text structure (Hoffmann et al., 2017). Therefore, the deeper investigations of text analysis on twitter is language.

Furthermore, discursive discourse under three more sections, the production, distribution and consumption of discourse. Therefore, the discourse of twitter could be examined in intertextuality. It is clear to reflect the sources and producer of discourse under examine the intertextuality (Zinken, 2003). Intertextuality refers to the text attribute of "the performance of other texts in any text", which is formally put forward by Kristeva (1980). After that, the concept of intertextuality was applied to many fields such as linguistics and communication by many scholars. Intertextuality has various definitions in history. In broad terms, it refers to the influence relationship of multiple discourses reflected in the text (Martin, 2011). In a narrow sense, it refers to the content of A text being presented in B text in some way (Zengin, 2016). Among them, the French scholar Samoyault(2003) explained the intertextuality in detail in his book "Intertextuality Research", including the classification of intertextual techniques and intertextual behaviors that link to different attitudes of discourse makers.

For this reason, in the production of discourse, the paper will classify texts that refer to the content of other users as "inter-text of intertextuality ", that is, inter-text within text. In terms of text distribution and consumption, this research classifies the disseminated texts of other users' texts as "extra-text of intertextuality ", that is, intertextualities other than utterance texts.

As for social practices, Fairclough（2003）considers power as a core concept of CDA, because power relations sharp the value and hegemony directly influencing the discourse. So the research takes power relation as standpoint to analyze the phenomenon.

2.2. A Selection of Data

Based on the CDA model, this paper collects the texts from Twitter to have a further analysis. The specific steps of this article are following. The author searched the keywords # huawei #, # renzhengfei # and # mengwanzhou # on Twitter to obtain 4,776 texts from December 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. According to the equidistant sampling, 981 original samples were randomly selected. Later, in order to obtain more comprehensive user information, the author cleans the sample data, and performs manual statistics and translation on the user information address. This is because the Twitter user address is not automatically generated based on the user's location, but is freely written by the user. Some users do not set the address, or although set the content, but it is the non-existence address, such as leakland, which are fake addresses.

According to the data collection, the author also makes statistics on the user's social identity, and divides them into two categories: institutional and individual users. The organization is divided into three categories: news organizations, technology website organizations and Huawei official. In terms of individual users, although opinion leaders and average users are individual users, their followers and influence on Twitter are different. More influence means that their words are read by more users compared to average users, so that the opinion leaders get more power in the discourse. According to the actual situation, there are two types of opinion leaders: one is a user who is authenticated by Twitter, and the other is a user who is not authenticated but has more than 10,000 followers. Two Twitter authentication methods are adapted in this part. One is that the platform uses algorithms to actively confirm the true identity of celebrities, and the other is that the platform passively audits the authentication applied by the user, and the probability of passing the audit is linked to the user's popularity. Therefore, the author believes that users authenticated by Twitter have certain popularity and can be regarded as opinion leaders. On the other hand, some users with more than 10,000 followers, (Parmelee et al., 2013), although authenticated, have received a high degree of attention, so they are classified as opinion leaders. In summary, there are five categories of social identity: news organizations, technology website organizations, Huawei officials, opinion leaders, and average users.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Texts

Metaphor is a vital investigation in language that is under the first dimension of CDA. Metaphor is a concept proposed by scholar Roman Jakobson (1990), which has always been regarded as a literary language. But Fairclough (2003) believes that it exists in all kinds of discourses. He thinks that when a specific metaphor is used to represent ideology.It is a specific way to recognize and construct reality, so metaphor is an important indicator of discourse analysis.

Metaphor refers to substituting metaphor for ontology, based on the similarities or categories proposed between the real subject and its metaphorical pronouns, to construct an alternative "reality" (Andreotti et al., 2011). The theme of Huawei on twitter also includes "reality" constructed by metaphors. When different users of discourse make some of the same metaphors and put them into their discourse, they construct "reality" from a new perspective. Behind these metaphors are also hidden positions and value judgments. There is Table 1.

Table 1. Use of Twitter "Huawei Discourse" Metaphor

Ontology	Metaphor
Huawei	Dirty bomb
	A security nightmare
	Claws of the Red Dragon
	PLA-er (People's Liberation Army-er)
	A company Full of thieving parasites
	A branch of Chinese Intelligence telecommunications company
	Trojan Horse
	Chinese telecoms giant 5G role
	National champion's telecom gear
China	Communist China
	Nazi China
	Totalitarian state
Google-huawei Cooperation	Down the Rabbit hole

From the above table, in the discourses of different users, Huawei is constructed as a telecom giant who steals users' information and attacks national security. Huawei not only has contacted with the Chinese government, but also helps African countries' dictatorships to monitor their political opponents and builds surveillance technology. Therefore, a huge security risk could be seen. These metaphors reflect the vigilance and hostility of such discourse users towards Huawei and even China.

One of the reason why these discourses occur is that China is always considered as a totalitarian state in media (Lee, 2020). Meanwhile, Huawei, as a Chinese company, is linked to China. So, in some metaphor, China uses Huawei as a weapon to attack the national security of other countries, and even spread and penetrate communist viruses. This is a kind of mind of zero-sum game, and it is obviously the Cold War mentality, and it is the confrontation between different ideologies behind the texts.

Through the use of metaphors, some discourse users construct Huawei in an incorrect or even distorted "reality", which reflects the disparate position and ideology of the discourse producers.

3.2. Discursive discourse

The production, distribution and consumption of discourse are three elements in discursive discourse analysis of CDA theory. This part analyses the production, distribution and consumption of discourse by tracing howthe Tweets created and who consumed them.

Tweets about topicsof Huawei could be presented in other people's tweets in various ways on Twitter. This way will form a model of a single text with multiple creators. These methods include direct citation, indirect citation, retweet and reference.

Direct quotation is a direct use of some words by the text producer, usually quoted by quotation marks.

When #Canada arrested #Huawei's heir #MengWanzhou, China's FM said "The detention without giving any reason violates a person's #HumanRights."

But not for a million #Uighurs #Muslims who are detained into "re-education camps" deprived of Basic Human Rights.

Figure1. direct citation

Although indirect quotation is a quotation in dialogue, it does not use quotation marks, but marks the original speaker to achieve the quotation effect by indicating the speaker.

New: Trump says he would intervene if needed in Justice Dept. case against Chinese telecom executive accused of violating Iran sanctions. Our story on Trump's interview, #MengWanzhou's bail hearing and the detention of a former Canadian diplomat in China.

翻译推文

Figure2. Indirect citation.

Retweet refers to forwarding the content of other users' tweets, such as speeches or website articles, to their own public homepage. This is the most common speaking behavior on Twitter. The content quoted in the retweet will be marked below the Tweet. Apart from that, the content of the quoted article or tweet is visible, and users can see the full content by clicking it.

Canadians are extremely disturbed as to why our PM ignored multiple warnings about #Huawei state sponsored espionage.
Whose side is Trudeau on 🤔
#cdnpoli #uspoli

National Post ✔ @nationalpost
Trudeau says people around the world 'extremely disturbed' by detention of Canadians in China
nationalpost.com/news/people-ar…

Figure 3. Retweet

There are two types of reference classifications as Samoyault (2003) mentioned. One is accurate reference materials, such as literature citations of academic works, and the other is simple references. The following analysis adopts a simple reference standard, that is, the mentioned topics can be traced back to the text.

In Twitter, the links attached to the text are mostly simple references. For example, some producers put a reference article link at the end of the text, and the content of the link has a certain relationship with the text itself, as shown in the following figure.
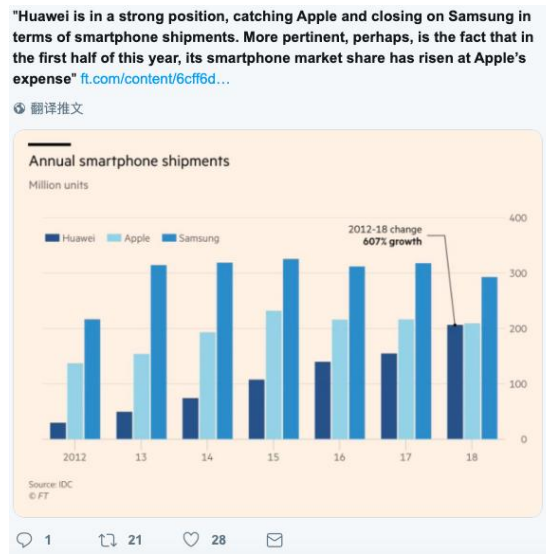
Figure 4. Reference

All of types could be considered as "pretext", which means the contents are citied by the others. Therefore, by discovering the categories of how the users generate texts, it is clear to find out what kind of texts will affect the discourse.

From the statistics, it can be seen that it is the organization that has the dominant position in the power structure of this link, and the individual producer has become the dominant person.

Table 2. Social identification of pre-text

Social identification	news organizations	technology website organizations	Huawei officials	Average users	opinion leaders
percentage	75.8%	9.6%	4.8%	1%	8.8%

In the production of discourse, more than 50% of the previous texts quoted by its content are from institutions. This shows that the text from the institution maybe a main entrance of information for the discourse makers. In the other words, institutions control the production of Huawei discourse on Twitter.

When it comes to the distribution and consumption of discourse, these parts need to be choose indicators that can reflect the communication paths and consumption texts because it has to reflect the audience's communication and interpretation of the text. However, since the most direct data "tweet page views" cannot be visually observed, "retweet number" was chosen in this study, which could directly reflect the communication path and the consumption text.

Retweet function on Twitter will show the dialogue in users' homepage, because both parties can be presented on the platform when they comment. Therefore, on the Twitter platform, discourse production is text creation based on other texts, and discourse consumption refers to interactive actions such as commenting on others' texts. As a result, retweet is a kind of extra-text of intertextuality that directly refers to the consumption of discourse.

Table 3. Social identification of retweet users

Social identification	Average users	Opinion leader	News organization	Non-identification
percentage	86.4%	5.7%	1.3%	6.6%

In the distribution and consumption of Huawei discourse, more than 80% of the retweets are average individual users. Therefore, it could be stated that it is the individual users who dominate the distribution and consumption of Huawei discourse.

To be specific, the average individual users are the dominant part in the consumption of discourse. They occupy the leading role in continued production in consumption.

However, no matter what kinds of quotation, the original text has been reproduced by the users, so it probably could be influenced by users' ideology. The first type of direct quotation using quotation marks can make the original discourse appear obvious, but the discourse text of the "markup" is still selected by the discourse creator (Maier, 2015). Therefore, the discourse writer will use the selected discourse to justify his point of view, thereby indirectly imposing it on the audience. Indirect discourse is more conducive for creators to rewrite the words and intonation of sentences, which means the indirect citation also reflects the attitude of the producer of the discourse (Dijk, 1993). The form of retweet can be considered as fully independent. References are less involved in the construction of discourse. So, it is also important to know whether the information of pre-text influences the users.

In twitter, users could show their opinions of pre-text directly in their own texts. Based on that, the researcher considers there are generally two kinds of attitude to the pre-text, agree or disagree. From these attitude, the deeper investigation could show whether the opinions of institution will be accepted by the users who quote.

Table 4. The attitude to pre-text

	agree	disagree
Percentage	79.2%	20.8%

3.3. Social Practice

The power contracture may change due to different social identities, relationships and other factors (Fairclough,2003). But when a power plays a leading role in a class of discourse, it could be determined that this kind of power occupies a certain discourse power or discourse advantage (Guo,2019). It at least shows two totally different power relations in the discourse.

Although the data shows that the participants of Huawei's discourse are all over the world and their identities are diverse, there is still a power structure behind the production, distribution and consumption of discourse.

From the statistical data above, first of all, news organizations and institution control the discourse production but behind the text. The institution does not directly control the discourse by news report but the information recourses. Once users on Twitter quote their information, it is easy for them to trap in the value already set up by the institution.

Secondly, the power relation of discourse consumption emphasizes the superior of average users. In exploring the discourse distribution and consumption parts, no matter what kinds of discourse inclination, more than 80% of the retweet users' identity data are average users, and other types of social identity users account for this proportion very little. Therefore, it can be explained that average users have become the absolute main force in this power relation, forming a power structure dominated by average users. The reason is the decentralized network technology provide average users with the possibility of contributing a new power structure.

Twitter as a social media, bring all the users in the same platform and give them the same opportunity to speak their own ideas. The decentralized features allow people to support the texts they like. So, they control the consumption of the discourse.

4. CONCLUSION

In the current international communication research, whether it is Dependency theory, Cultural Imperialism theory, Media Imperialism theory or World system theory, it is believed that the current international communication pattern presents the phenomenon that the national media of developed countries dominates（Ming,2006）. However, it seems that the social media that owns the decentralized technology bring some changes to this power relation.

Fairclough's CDA is useful in investigating the social discourse. Applying the theory to Huawei discourse could have deeper learning in the power structure behind the discourse. So, the article examined the three dimensions of Huawei discourse on Twitter from the perspective of CDA theory, and found that institutions, especially news institutions, still control the production of the previous text, and decentralized social media has not shaken this power structure.

However, average users actively participate in the discourse consumption link, thereby forming a dominant force in this link and dissolving some of the media power. It can be seen that although the current online social media has not shaken the original media power, the social media with decentralized technology partly dissolve the power structure.

This study still has some drawbacks, such as the accuracy of social identification. In the future, we can try to have more accurate information and analyze the discourse more variables. In addition, this study could not consider the fake followers.For example, fake follower accounts are controlled by robotsand they are used to get averifiedsymbol (Cresciab et al., 2015).

Some users would buy Twitter followers to pretend the opinion leader (Stringhini,2013). This inaccurate information will influence the data. Besides,Twitter restrict the data mining in tweetpage views, which means no direct data of the consumption and margin of error probably be included in result (Aral & Zhao, 2019). So, thefuture study may be useful for sample surveying proper margin of error, but the large sample may need to consider another method.

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AUTHOR

Zheng, qiqi Short Biography.