

Discourse Analysis of President Bush's Speech at Tsinghua University, China

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is a pragmatic interpretation of President George W. Bush's speech that was given to students at Tsinghua University when he visited China in 2002. In particular, this study is framed with the theory of Political Discourse Analysis and aims to demonstrate that Bush's skillful use of rhetorical strategies in this political speech is closely associated with his overall political goals of holding up American values as a model for China and China's development. The findings reveal two main themes: one is the construction of Americanism - and the other is an indirect critique of China's current societal situation along with direct instruction on what should be changed. In addition, the study also demonstrates how Bush and his administration see the power relationships between the U.S.A. and China in terms of economic, political, and civil development.

Introduction

U.S. President George W. Bush visited China in 2002 and gave a speech at Tsinghua University, which is one of the universities with the highest of academic reputations in China. This is the third time that a U.S. president has given a speech at a university campus during a visit to China since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1972. The main purpose of Bush's speech was to convey American values, U.S. policies, and China's future.

Some people viewed this presidential speech in such an overseas setting as a diplomatic trick; others thought that such face-to-face communications make the concept of "seeking common ground while reserving difference," as China has advocated, more realistic and explicit. Regardless of particular motivations in varied contexts, politicians and political institutions are sustained by persuasive or manipulative uses of language (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997). In respect to the different responses to Bush's speech, no matter if the audiences are Chinese people or American people, there is no doubt that Bush's speech at Tsinghua University had special meaning.

This study aims to uncover implicit meanings in Bush's speech and to reveal what Bush really wanted audiences to know and believe. By using rhetorical analytical instruments, I intend to explore what rhetorical strategies Bush used in his speech to achieve his goals. In addition, I intend to explore how President Bush and Bush's administration perceive the power relationship between the U.S.A. and China in terms of global economic and political status.

Theoretical Frameworks

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA)

This study is framed with the theory of political discourse analysis. For Chilton & Schäffner (1997), what is ‘political’ is a matter of interpretation, and one focus of attention in PDA has been a critical reflection on the strategic use of political concepts, or keywords, for achieving specific political aims. According to Wilson (2001), “linguistic options for representing the world are clearly, then, central issues in political discourse; utterances within the context of political output are rarely isolated grammatical cases” (p. 404). Wilson uses Sir Patrick Mayhew’s (the Secretary of state for Northern Ireland) remarks on BBC Television as an example, and demonstrates the influence of semantic choices. When Mayhew made a speech in the House of Commons, he made the following claims: 1) We did not *talk* to the IRA, we had channels of *communication*/contacts. 2) We did not *authorize* anyone to talk with the IRA. Mayhew explains two possible interpretations as follows: We did not authorize anyone to talk to the IRA, so no one did; we did not authorize anyone to talk to the IRA, although someone did (unauthorized). As Wilson interprets, a semantic contrast between *talk* and *communication* claims that “the British government did not have articulate verbal contact, but did communicate with IRA using selected channels of communication” (p. 405). This example illustrates “the need for arguments about political manipulation to draw on large-scale linguistic structures, as well as general grammar and single words or phrases” (Wilson, 2001, p. 405). Therefore, the derived implication as a political representation may reconstitute the world for hearers. Wilson (2001) re-addresses the goal of political discourse analysis which is “to seek out the ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effect and almost all levels of linguistics are involved” (p. 410).

Similarly, Chilton & Schäffner (1997) offer three levels of linguistic analysis of texts and talk that can be used to analyze the speaker’s strategic functions: pragmatics, semantics, and syntax. Even when a segment of talk or text is monologic, it usually involves implicit dialogic organization, reflecting oppositional discourses in the surrounding political culture (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997). PDA helps to make conscious consideration of the relationships between the speaker and others established during the actual utterance of the text. Essentially, PDA also requires the balance between linguistic analysis and political analysis. In other words, PDA looks at what specific linguistic choices have been made in what social and political terms and cause what political effect. As Schäffner (1996) concludes, in political discourse, “political speech analysis can be successful when it relates the details of linguistic behavior to political behavior” (p. 202).

Edelman (1988) also notes that the functions of political discourse is to present proposals concerning actions and policies that ought, should, or must be pursued as well as what future realities must be prevented and what future realities are desirable. Agreeing with Edelman, Dunmire (2005) posits a key ideological component of political discourse, that is, “its construction and representation of future realities and the rhetorical function those representations serve in implicating more immediate material and discursive practices and actions” (p. 484).

Language plays an important role in manifesting political wills and accompanying political actions. However, as Schäffner (1996) states, “in political discourse linguistics have always been interested in the linguistic structures used to get politically relevant messages across to the addressees in order to fulfill a specific function, but narrow linguistic analysis of political discourse cannot ignore the broader societal and political framework in which such

discourse is embedded” (p. 201). Therefore, Schäffner (1996), Sauer (1996), and Fairclough (1996) claim that the analysis of political speeches in political discourse should relate linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions, and they recommend using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the integrated approach.

CDA, as Fairclough (1996) claims, is “a perspective which is concerned with showing up often opaque connections between language and other aspects of society and culture” (p. 287). In addition, van Dijk (1993) suggests examining the style, rhetoric or meaning of texts for strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations and the exercise of power. In order to obtain certain ideologies that the group with power wants to construct, the circumstances of text construction such as who, when, where, and how, and a deep analysis of the texts themselves cannot be ignored, as CDA suggests (Van Dijk, 1993). Therefore, in this study, besides unraveling the implicated meanings of Bush’s speech, I include CDA to explore how and why President Bush and Bush’s administration hold a dominant status of the U.S.A. in the global political relations.

In order to analyze Bush’s speech in such a political discourse, influenced by the theory of PDA, this study used rhetorical analytical methodologies to investigate rhetoric tropes appeared in Bush’s speech, as well as to interpret his speech correctly. It is necessary to mention here that PDA is not limited by such an analytical method.

Analytical Methodology

Rhetorical Strategies

For Wodak et al. (1999), strategy designed to guide hearers’ thinking is mainly identified in terms of planned social activities, the political or socio-psychological aims or functions of these activities, and linguistic means designated to help realize these aims. In order to understand the construction of national identity in discourse, Wodak et al. (1999) examined the different types of macro-strategies employed in the discursive formation from their data (a critical survey and a pilot study). They claim, “the macro-strategies correspond to the social macro-functions, namely construction, perpetuation or justification, transformation and demontage or dismantling” (p. 33). In addition, Wodak et al. (1999) explain how they categorize these different strategies as well as their corresponding functions:

[Among macro-strategies and subgroup strategies,] constructive strategies attempt to construct and to establish a certain national identity by promoting unification, identification and solidarity, as well as differentiation. Strategies of transformation aim to transform a relatively well-established national identity and its components into another identity the contours of which the speaker has already conceptualized. Strategies of assimilation aim to create a temporal, interpersonal or spatial (territorial) similarity and homogeneity in reference to the various thematic dimensions; [on the other hand] strategies of dissimilation create a temporal, interpersonal or territorial difference and heterogeneity in reference to these same dimensions ... (p. 33).

In Wodak et al.’s (1999) study “the attention has been focused primarily on lexical units and syntactic devices which serve to construct unification, unity, sameness, difference, and so on” (p. 35).

Based on Wodak et al.’s (1999) realization methodology, Ricento’s (2003) study analyzes the construction of Americanism at the macro-discourse level during the period of the Americanization campaign, 1914-1924. Ricento uses 514 pages of text collected at three national archives from varieties of genres. Naming Wodak et al.’s “strategy” as “rhetorical

strategies,” Ricento focuses on three main rhetorical strategies, including constructive strategies with sub-groups (strategies of justification which attempt to justify a societal status; strategies of unification and cohesivation which emphasize unifying common features; strategy of avoidance), strategies of transformation which address the differences from an established status to another new one, and strategies of perpetuation which presuppose and/or emphasize positive political continuity (strategy of avoidance is also a sub-strategy in this category). In addition to rhetorical strategies, Ricento looks at linguistic forms in the texts, such as the use of pronouns, verb tenses, and the use of passives.

Flowerdew (2002) studies three speeches written by Chris Patten (the last British governor of Hong Kong) and demonstrates the heavy use of the tropes of “metaphor, antithesis, parallelism, actualization, and the unities of time, place and action” in Patten’s political oratory. According to Flowerdew (2002), Patten’s speeches enriched by rhetorical strategies, namely rhetorical weight, help to create the view how Britain would be perceived in relation to its withdrawal from Hong Kong. Another study conducted by Murphy (2003) also exemplifies how various rhetorical strategies are applied to a speech. Analyzing President Bush’s speeches on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Murphy explores the rhetorical styles that Bush adopted in defining the attacks of September 11th to his advantage. Murphy explains that Bush used three rhetorical strategies in his speech, including choice of genre, use of visual imagery, and creation of self and audience. As identified by Murphy, “Bush’s decision to speak through the epideictic genre (Aristotle) positioned him as the voice of America, and his masterful use of visual imagery, a practice that extended beyond September 20, made it difficult to dispute his policies” (p. 620). In addition, in analyzing Queen Beatrix’s address to the Knesset, Sauer argues for more consideration of rhetoric within the framework of political discourse analysis (cited in Schäffner, 1996).

From the literature above, we note that although different terminologies are used (i.e. strategy, rhetorical strategy, rhetorical style) and different aspects (e.g. linguistic means, epideictic genre) are highlighted, their analyses share a similar ultimate goal, which is to recontextualize the meaning of the speech. As Ricento (2003) and Wodak et al. (1999) explain, strategies as plans are used to achieve certain political, psychological or other kinds of objectives.

This study uses rhetorical tropes (Flowerdew, 2002) and rhetorical strategies and linguistic strategies (i.e. tense, pronouns) (Ricento, 2003; Wodak et al., 1999) as textual analytic tools, probing implied meanings in order to identify discursive tools that appeared in Bush’s speech. The observed rhetorical tropes in Bush’s speech are parallelism, metaphor, antithesis, passive voice, and personification. Strategies uncovered in this study include constructive strategies, strategies of transformation, and strategies of perpetuation.

The Present Context

As a part of President Bush’s scheduled visit to China in 2002, he gave his speech at Tsinghua University after Chinese Vice-President Hu made an opening speech. Hu expressed his good wishes, “I hope young people in the two countries will increase exchanges, enhance friendship, learn from each other, and work together to promote peace, progress and development of the world” (Hu, 2002). Chinese and global media also commented on Bush’s remarks at Tsinghua University, reporting, for example, “such face-to-face communications make the concept of ‘seeking common ground while reserving differences’ more explicit and realistic” (Li and Xiao, 2002). “Mr. Bush emphasized his speech on democracy was extolling

the virtues of the American way of life rather than criticizing China directly" (Bush Preaches Democracy to China, February, 22, 2005). President Bush reaffirmed the "candid, constructive and cooperative relationship" between the two countries (Bush's visit to China Reaffirms Constructive Ties: US Official, February 28, 2002), and his visit to China is another important milestone in building the cooperative and constructive relationship between the two countries (Bush Visit Another Milestone in U.S.-China Ties, February 20, 2002). "Bush's speech is a summation of the essential values in American civic society, but I do not dream an 'American Dream' or the American image of a beautiful life," said Deng Yu, a student in the Engineering and Mechanics Department (Meng & Hu, 2002). It is clear that the responses towards Bush's speech varied by different understandings. However, when Ricento (2003) analyzes historical texts of the construction of Americanism, he claims, "the relative positionings of different social and ethnic groups in society are not made transparent merely by reading the surface of historical texts, or even by debating differing interpretations of those texts" (p. 615). Therefore, likewise, reading the surface of political speech cannot make the speaker's intention transparent.

Identifying the context can help readers or hearers understand coherent relations across utterances. According to Schiffrin (1994), "the interaction between text and context implies a procedure of combining linguistic meaning with context to derive inferences about messages" (p. 363). Therefore, understanding political and economic relations between China and the U.S. around 2002 is important for this study in order to accurately interpret Bush's speech at Tsinghua University.

In the years 2001 and 2002, bilateral relations between China and the U.S. improved greatly because of joint efforts by both sides. President Jiang (the former president of China) and President Bush had a successful meeting during the ninth APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shanghai on Oct. 19, 2001. Additionally, China's formal entry into the World Trade Organization in Nov. 2001 pushed forward the development of bilateral trade relations. In December 27, 2001, President Bush signed a proclamation granting permanent normal trading relations (PNTR) status to the People's Republic of China. Vice Premier Qian Qichen of the People's Republic of China visited Washington and New York on March 18-24, 2001 and met President Bush on March 22, 2001. Through frequent Sino-U.S. contacts, the two countries had more chances to exchange ideas and enhance mutual understanding. Also, the two countries have seen good results in their co-operation in fighting terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation on a global scale.

On February 21 and 22, 2002, President Bush visited Beijing, China, which coincidentally took place on the same day as former President Richard Nixon's historical "ice-breaking" visit three decades ago. As reported by the Office of the U.S. Press Secretary: "During his [Bush's] visit to these three countries (Japan, Rep. of Korea, and P.R.China), the President will discuss our common struggle against terrorism, economic recovery, the strengthening of our alliances in the region, and other areas of mutual interest" (President to Visit Japan, Rep. of Korea & China, January 2002). Clark T. Randt Jr., who is the U.S. Ambassador to China, also commented on Bush's visit to China and said, "as two great nations, the US and China have 'overriding interests' in areas like safety and prosperity of the people, which is served by peace and stability in the region and globally" (Bush Visit Another Milestone in U.S.-China Ties, February 20, 2002). Although differences between the two nations still exist, Randt said that "facing such differences, President Bush and he himself both held that the two sides should approach those differences in a candid and constructive

way and the leaders of two countries can talk frankly about them to build mutual trust”(Bush Visit Another Milestone in U.S.-China Ties, February 19, 2002). Mei Zhaorong, President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, commented on Bush's visit that “The billions of people here in China hope President Bush can fulfill his promise of developing constructive cooperative relations with China by carrying out concrete action” (Bilateral Ties, Anti-Terrorism Focus of Bush's China Visit, February 21, 2002). U.S. President George W. Bush said at the press conference that the United States will be a steady partner in China's historic transition to greater prosperity (Presidents on Bilateral Ties and International Issues, February 21, 2002).

On the other hand, Tsinghua University not only holds important academic status in China, but also holds important political status. Several important Chinese political leaders all graduated from Tsinghua University, such as President Hu Jintao, former Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, two vice Prime Minister Huang Jü and Zeng PeiYan, and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Wu Bangguo. There is a great potential that students of Tsinghua University will play important roles in Chinese civic, economic, and social development after they graduate. Speaking to students in this prestigious university can be seen as speaking to China's future leaders.

Data and Thematic Analysis

The data collected for this study are transcripts of President Bush's speech at Tsinghua University on February 22nd, 2002. The speech is found on the official website of the White House at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/20020222.html>. The meeting with students lasts 51 minutes 26 seconds. However, because this study only focuses on Bush's speech analysis, I excluded the section of question (request)-response (refuse/accept) interaction between Bush and Chinese students after his speech.

Although President Bush's speech given at Tsinghua University is straightforward, his political goals were not explicitly stated. In Bush's speech, two main themes stand out: one is the construction of Americanism; the other is the indirect critique of China's current societal situation and direct instruction on what should be changed.

The Construction of Americanism

Bush drew a clear and idealized picture of Americanism and propagated American values on this occasion. He referred to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States several times to emphasize “freedom,” “faith,” “family,” and “equality.”

Bush used parallelism many times in the speech. Parallelism is a powerful rhetorical device to convince readers, because “elements in the sentence that are alike in form are taken as a signal that they are fulfilling the same role in the expression” (Weaver, 1967, p. 188). Weaver (1967) also claims that parallelism is a device for keeping the reader on track and the equivalent elements in structure call attention to their equivalence. One excerpt of Bush's speech is shown below:

(1) **Our movies and television shows** often do not portray the value of the real America I know. **Our successful businesses show** the strength of American commerce, but our spirit, and contributions to each other are not always visible as monetary success. Some erroneous pictures of America are painted by others ... and while the words may be leftovers from a previous era, **they are misleading and they are harmful.**

In this excerpt, Bush uses parallel sentence structure to attract audiences' attention to "what Americans values are". He implies that the information about Americans that Chinese audiences see on TV is not correct. Bush adopts the defensive strategy which is a sub-group strategy of *Strategies of Perpetuation*. He negates the image of Americans and American values delivered by the American mass media. To sum up, Bush uses the parallel structure as a persuasive strategy to convince audiences that all "bad" images and values shown on TV or in the movie are not the "real" image and values that Americans have.

President Bush also uses parallelism as *Constructive Strategy* to depict an idealized country and to preach American values of equality, freedom and liberty.

(2) No matter your background or your circumstance of birth, in America **you can** get a good education, **you can** start your own business, **you can** raise a family, **you can** worship freely, and help elect the leaders of your community and your country. You can support the policies of our government, or you're free to openly disagree with them.

On the other hand, as cited by Flowerdew (2002), the technique of using series of nouns or verbs is described as being "highly persuasive" and "replicating a sense of emotional, intellectual or sensory pressure in the audience" (Cockroft & Cockroft, 1992, p. 130). In another excerpt shown below, Bush once again emphasizes the central themes: equality, freedom, faith, and liberty.

(3) **We** are a **free** nation...**we** are a nation of laws. No one is above the law, and no one is beneath it. America is a nation guided by **faith**.

In addition to parallelism, in this excerpt, Bush skillfully adopts *Strategies of Unification and Cohesivation* by using the first person pronoun "we" to construct American identity.

Bush, moreover, addresses the value of liberty and freedom by using the passive voice as shown below. According to Weaver (1967), the passive voice gives emphasis to parts of the sentence which normal word order does not emphasize by moving the grammatical object to the position of subject. Then the attention of audiences is centered upon this phrase.

(4) Our liberty is given direction and purpose by moral character, shaped in strong families, strong communities, and strong religious institutions, and overseen by a strong and fair legal system... Freedom of religion is not something to be feared.

Another rhetorical trope used to construct Americanism observed in Bush's speech is antithesis. Aristotle defines antithesis as a verbal structure that places contrasted or opposed terms in parallel or balanced cola or phrases, and opposites are most knowable and more knowable when put besides each other (Fahnestock, 2000). Therefore, the content after the contrasting words/phrases is the emphasized idea.

(5) Our successful business shows strength of American commerce, **but** our spirit, community spirit, and contributions to each other are not always visible as monetary success.

More profound, Bush views Americanism as spirituality, which is echoed with the theme of religion in his remarks – (6) "Ninety-five percent of Americans say they believe in God, and I'm one of them."

More positive images of America and Americanism emerge in Bush's remarks than negative images. Bush uses the rhetorical strategy of avoidance when he mentioned problems in American society in order to decrease the negative influence on his idealized Americanism.

(7) “My country certainly has its share of problems, no question about that. And we have our faults”. Bush stops to explicitly elaborate on this topic.

Analysis of the excerpts above helps us understand how Bush skillfully constructs the ideology of Americanism and American values for Chinese audiences. Moreover, it is essential to note that Bush also has the American audience in mind in describing his understanding of Americanism and American values.

The Indirect Critique and Direct Instruction of What Should be Changed

President Bush preaches American values and Americanism without explicitly criticizing China’s political and societal system. However, through rhetorical strategies and rhetorical tropes, he indirectly denounces the Chinese government’s current “dictatorship” and provides advice on how China needs to change.

While selling American values to Chinese audiences, Bush actually criticizes the Chinese government in terms of faith, freedom, and liberty. He implies that China does not share the same values as the U.S., and China is not a nation of freedom.

(8) Those who fear freedom sometimes argue it could lead to chaos, **but** it does not, because freedom means more than every man for himself.

While explaining how the American system really works, Bush uses antithesis shown above to criticize the way that the Chinese government deals with dissidents, such as Wang Dan who was the rebel of Tiananmen Square event. He implies that the Chinese government should tolerate dissent and give protesters freedom and the right to speak. Moreover, Bush uses another parallel structure to strengthen his argument: (9) “in a free society, diversity is not disorder. Debate is not strife. And dissent is not revolution”. However, Bush’s understanding of freedom is an idealization of American Society. For example, if “diversity is not disorder in a free society,” why has California essentially banned bilingual education in public schools with the passage of Proposition 227? In addition, ironically, according to Agence France Press and ABC News, on Oct 27, 2005, US police arrested Cindy Sheehan, the mother of a US soldier killed in Iraq who has become a prominent war opponent, in front of the White House.

Implicitly reflecting on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement, Bush makes another critique on faith or religion in China and calls on religious liberty by using the same antithesis style. As the Washington Post reported, “the University where Bush spoke has been a hotbed of activism by the banned Falun Gong movement, and Bush focused much of his speech on religious liberty” (Allen & Pan, 2002). In contrast, he called the United States “a nation guided by faith” and a nation of freedom.

(10) Regardless of where or how these believers worship, they’re no threat to public order; in fact, they make good citizens...My prayer is that all persecution will end, so that all in China are free to gather and worship as they wish.

In the latter part of (10), Bush uses Aristotle’s epideictic rhetoric and directly blames the “persecution”. He invites audiences to recall the past and speculate about the future while focusing on the present; he employs a dignified literary style and emphasizes or rehearses admitted facts. “My prayer is that all persecution will end” implies that in China persecution on worship is still going on. In the later talk, formal President Jiang differentiated the freedom of religion and the violation of law. He responded to Bush’s remarks on religion freedom: “Whatever religion people believe in, they have to abide by the law. So some of the law-

breakers have been detained because of their violation of law, not because of their religious belief" (Allen & Pan, 2002).

Regarding political liberalization in China, Bush comments (11) "the change is coming." The use of the present progressive tense indicates the action and the progress, which reflects Bush's positive attitudes and expectation towards the development of political democratization. He then quotes former Chinese president Deng Xiaoping's words as shown below:

(12) Nearly 20 years ago, a great Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, said this -- I want you to hear his words. He said that China would eventually expand democratic elections all the way to the national level. I look forward to that day.

Bush uses strategies of perpetuation to defend his call for freedom and democratic regime change in China.

The intention of instructing China how to change and develop in future is even clearer in Bush's use of a personification metaphor. (13) "China is on a rising path, and America welcomes the emergence of a strong and peaceful and prosperous China." Bush here uses the strategies of transformation. He implies that only if China follows the route that the U.S.A suggests, will China have an opportunity to be grouped with other prestigious members (developed countries like the U.S.A.). Using the metaphor (14) "Yet there's a reason our nation shines as a beacon of hope and opportunity ... It's because we're a free nation ..." Bush expresses the status of the U.S.A clearly and vividly. The implication of "a beacon of hope" connotes leadership. China must follow the U.S.A, the "beacon," in order to find hope. Bush implicitly reveals a power relationship between the U.S.A and China in which the U.S.A has higher prestige.

Discussion and Conclusion

Schäffner (1996) points out that "politicians do not deliver speeches as individuals, but rather as representatives of political parties, governments, or nations" (p. 203). Then point of views from Bush's speech given at Tsinghua University represent Bush's administration's standpoints. Through the speech, Bush and his administration's purposes are more than trying to influence Chinese audience and their knowledge about faith, freedom, and equality.

As discourse analysis researchers (e.g. Schiffrin.1994, Van Dijk. 1997, Gee, 1999) demonstrate, context is viewed as knowledge which guides the use of language and the interpretation of utterances. In the year of 2001 and 2002, the frequent contact between China and the U.S.A. created a political discourse that President Bush was involved with when he gave the speech at Tsinghua University. Sino-U.S. frequent contact not only aids mutual understanding, but also gives opportunities to both two countries to "sell" themselves. Moreover, the joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO) facilitates China's economic development. Unlike former president Clinton, the Bush administration has not embraced China as a "strategic partner" but as a "strategic competitor" as Bush claimed during his 2000 campaign. Bush retains an abiding belief that only a free and democratic China will be a responsible international player and will not pose a threat to its neighbors (Taylor, 2001). Therefore, while the U.S.A assists China's integration into the world economy, the U.S.A is more concerned about how China's economic development would ultimately pose a greater impact on the U.S.A interests on economic success and how to control the growth of the Chinese economic threat. In order to take control of global trade and the world economy, the Bush administration likely continues to generate pressure on China for political change

toward Western-style democracy (Diamond, 1999). So, how are we to understand the future of China in Bush's vision?

By understanding the macro-context, it is easier to understand Bush's long-term intention towards China. Using rhetorical strategies, President Bush's speech appealed to the interest of audiences, involving knowledge of what is good for China's future development and what should be changed according to the interests of the U.S.A. In this case, the concept of "seeking common ground while reserving differences" has not been represented in Bush's speech; instead, he implicitly advocates decreasing "the differences" by planting American democratic principles on Chinese soil.

This study investigates how the meaning and use of particular expressions are constructed within a certain political discourse. As suggested in this study, using different linguistic features affects interpretation, but other contextual factors play an even more important role in understanding meaning. Recognizing linguistic and rhetorical strategies Bush used in the speech, we can disclose how Bush discursively constructs Americanism and ideology of China's future. He skillfully allows his audiences to convey and interpret the communicative content of what is said and what is implied. Meanwhile, Bush constructs the power relation between the U.S.A. and China.

Without knowledge of context and discourse, people can only understand his speech in a micro-level perspective, such as: "Bush's speech was positive in promoting bilateral relations in the future, especially through cultural exchanges and people-to-people contact" (Meng & Hu, 2002). This impression is constrained within the literal understanding of the speech, but this study broadens this understanding. Different levels of understanding exactly echo Chilton and Schäffner's (1997) belief of PDA: what is 'political' is a matter of interpretation. As Wilson (2001) suggests, language-based analyses require researchers analyzing specific linguistic choice in social and political terms.

Bush's understanding and belief of freedom, liberty, and religion represent the mainstream, and American ideologies he espoused are socially recognized by the global mass media, although he negates the role of the mass media in delivering images of Americanism. His promoting of American values is easy to be recognized by the audiences. "'Bush's speech is a summation of the essential values in American civic society.' Deng, a Phd applicant in the Engineering and Mechanics Department" (Meng & Hu, 2002). On the contrary, since not all the audiences share cognition of American society such as people and power, it is hard for them to judge the idealized phenomenon. As Wodak (1987) points out, recipients may not have the knowledge and beliefs needed to challenge the discourses or information they are exposed to. The Chinese audiences probably believe in:

(2) No matter your background or your circumstance of birth, in America you can get a good education, you can start your own business, you can raise a family, you can worship freely, and help elect the leaders of your community and your country.

Therefore, the ability to recognize Bush's macro-level intention in his speech can only be reached through acquired knowledge of discourse. To sum up, this study indicates that Bush's administration wants to engage China economically, culturally, and politically, but in an American-guided way.

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