The Discursive Representation of China in Poverty Alleviation Editorials—Taking China Daily as Example

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Abstract

Poverty alleviation work is an important strategic plan of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council. Since the reform and opening up, the party and the state have carried out large-scale poverty alleviation and development, lifted 700 million rural impoverished individuals out of poverty and achieved great achievements that have attracted worldwide attention. In order to help global poverty reduction, promote global exchanges and share experiences, and help the world better understands China, this paper conducts in-depth discussions on the enlightenment of China’s poverty reduction experience to the world’s poverty reduction governance, and China’s plan to promote the world’s poverty eradication, so as to share poverty reduction practices, help global poverty governance and comprehensively display China’s international images. Based on the poverty alleviation editorial in the China Daily, through the corpus analysis through the three metafunctions of Systemic Functional Linguistics, this paper explains how China expresses the national concern, national value and national orientation to the domestic and international stage.

Keywords

China Daily, Editorial, Poverty alleviation discourse, Systematic functional linguistics, the three metafunctions, Political discourse analysis, National image construction

1. Introduction

Poverty was and continues to be the greatest global challenge for human community. Poverty is generally defined as the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. According to Sustainable Development Goals issued by the United Nations in 2019, more than 700 million people, or 10 per cent of the world population, still live in extreme poverty today. Against such a backdrop, reducing and eradicating poverty has been a common concern and attracted global attention. As the first most populous nation and largest developing country, China has been severely impoverished over a long period of time. Since the foundation in 1949, China was committed to eradicating extreme poverty by launching a long-term struggle against poverty. With decades’ persistence and devotion, China set itself up as an exemplary model in the world community for unprecedented achievements in poverty governance (Huang & Liu, 2022). By and large, China is now worldlly recognized as an important actor and contributor in the cause of global poverty reduction. Especially after more than 40 years of reform and opening up, driven by self-reliance and international assistance, China has solved the problem...
of lifting more than 800 million people out of poverty, accounting for more than 75% of the global poverty reduction since the 1980s, effectively balanced the uneven pattern of world wealth distribution, and made great contributions to the realization of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

China Daily, the only national English-language newspaper in China, is commonly viewed as the voice of the Chinese government to the outside world. Since the establishment in 1981 it is praised by global readers as China’s most authoritative English media and an important window for the world to understand China. As a fixed column of China Daily, its editorial undoubtedly is a platform for the public to understand and learn about Chinese central government’s advocacy and practices. Editorials serve as the newspaper’s explicit voice in terms of the sources or structure of information, selection of topics and use of language. According to Morán Torres (1988), editorial is a powerful instrument in the origination and propagation of ideological campaigns that orient readers. It is of great significance to study poverty alleviation editorials in People’s Daily from the perspective of authoritative newspapers.

Discourse analysis from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics enable to reveal the value and communicative function of specific texts (Huang, 2010; Yong & Harrison, 2004). In view of these considerations, the present study introduces the three metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics to the analysis of poverty alleviation editorials in the China Daily in terms of theme system, transitivity system and mood system, explore the discourse characteristics and motivations of the editorials of Chinese authoritative newspapers, and reveal the discursive strategies of building the national image of China.

2. Discourse Studies on Poverty Alleviation

Up to date, studies on poverty alleviation discourse mainly focus on the image construction of poverty stricken people. The discursive framing of contested policy arenas such as inequality, poverty and unemployment has often drawn from deserving/undeserving and underclass discourses (Wiggan, 2012). These largely cast ‘poor people’ as lacking appropriate motivation, prone to inadequate social behaviors and, ultimately, responsible for their own failure (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Misra et al., 2003).

Compared with overseas studies, Chinese studies on poverty alleviation discourse are evidently positive. Regarding national leadership’s speech about poverty alleviation, Bin Huang and Xin Li (2019) discuss Xi Jinping’s poverty alleviation discourse style since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China from the perspective of Fairclough’s three-dimensional discourse analysis of text, discourse practice and social practice, and concludes that Xi Jinping’s poverty alleviation discourse is both rigid and soft. Xuewei Li (2020) has studied China’s poverty alleviation policy discourse since the reform and opening up. Based on the perspective of pragmatics theory, through integrating different types of policy discourse, he has summarized the basic features and implications of China’s policy discourse, as well as the mechanism by which public policy plays its discourse function.

With regard to English translations of poverty alleviation, Xiaohua Li and Qingye Tang (2021) conduct an indepth analysis of the translation of poverty alleviation terms with Chinese characteristics from the perspective of translation strategies. By studying the translation of poverty alleviation discourse, Zheng Xiong (2019) concludes that two rhetorical devices, "choice" and "expression", can be used to adjust the translation, enhance the rhetorical function, arouse the audience’s interest, stimulate interaction and build identity. As for poverty alleviation reports, Qi Cai and Meng Wu (2019) studied the subject image and discourse framework analysis of China’s targeted poverty alleviation reports. The research shows that the reports create the image of the government as "responsible, scientific and warm", and construct the image of the poor as "beneficiaries, learners and grateful". In general, domestic research on poverty alleviation editorials is lacking.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

Data were collected from China Daily’s editorial. From the editorials, we selected 16 poverty-related texts after carefully reading their textual content. The collected texts span the time period from June 25, 2017 (Time of release of China’s first poverty alleviation editorial) to June 30, 2021 and own 7341 English words in total.

3.2 Research Instrument

My research instrument is AntConc, which is a corpus retrieval tool with a simple and intuitive interface, profes-
sional and practical functions, and convenient operation. AntConc is suitable for the study of language and writing, with indexing, word list generation, the calculation of key word list, collocation and clusters extraction and other functions, so that it can be easily utilized to analyze the vocabulary topic in the text.

### 3.3 Research Procedure

In the data analysis stage, first of all, in order to identify the topic of the editorial and grasp the overall direction of the editorial, we read through the collected corpus and then summarized topics. Secondly, assisted by AntConc, we obtained the number and occurrence rate of key words in collected text, so as to have a global understanding about what was addressed in the editorial. In the stage of corpus analysis, first of all, according to the textual function of SFL, we counted up the themes in the editorial to confirm the national concerns. Then, according to the ideational function, the five processes of transitivity in editorial were analyzed to confirm Chinese mainstream values held by China in the fight against poverty. Finally, according to the interpersonal function, we analyzed the editorial mood and confirmed the national orientation of the country.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Overview of poverty alleviation editorial of China Daily

These editorials cover three topics. The statistics of keywords as well as the number, length and content of editorial’s topics are presented in two tables which are as follows:

As shown by tables 1 and 2, the poverty alleviation editorial topics generally deal with the reality of poverty alleviation in China, with focus on the introduction to challenges in various poverty alleviation stages, effective poverty alleviation policies issued by the government for poverty alleviation, and achievements made by the government in poverty alleviation. With regard to keywords, the word "poverty" has appeared 132 times, the word "rural" 100 times, the word “China” 55 times, and “the country” representing China 50 times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Number of occurrence</th>
<th>key words</th>
<th>Frequency of occurrence (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>poverty</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>china</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>country</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>areas</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. The statistics of the number, length and content of editorial’s topics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>China’s Poverty alleviation measures</th>
<th>the difficulties of China’s poverty alleviation</th>
<th>the achievements of China’s poverty alleviation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>According to the reality of poverty alleviation process, editorials introduce poverty alleviation measures released by government.</td>
<td>Introduce the key tenets and Challenges in poverty alleviation</td>
<td>Illustrate the achievements of China’s poverty alleviation and its impact on the world, actively share the successful poverty alleviation measures of China in the world, which makes reference for the world’s poverty alleviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4.2 Analysis on national concern from the perspective of textual function

Textual function refers to the function of language to express the relationship between discourse and context, as well as the internal organization of discourse, which is mainly reflected by the thematic system (Zhang Delu, 2011:1). The theme system of any sentences consist of theme and rhyme. Theme is the starting point of discourse and the object of sentence information; Rheme is a statement of theme. Since theme sets up the subject framework for the development of discourse and reflects the central idea and development context of the whole discourse, the analysis of theme can help understand the focus of the discourse and explore the motivation and social significance behind the discourse. According to different semantic functions, theme can be divided into thematic theme (served by subject and general adverbial), interpersonal theme (served by modal adverbial or commentary adverbial) and textual theme (served by connectives) (Halliday, 1994:38). Among the 363 themes in poverty alleviation editorials, 290 are the thematic themes, accounting for 83%; 51 are the textual themes, accounting for 14%; and 11 are interpersonal themes, making up only 3%. The thematic theme simply states the facts, which is more objective, formal and authoritative, and the corresponding discourse control as the speaker is also stronger. These findings are in line with the authority of the China Daily as one of the world’s top ten newspapers. In other words, authoritative and objective discourse also contributes to strengthening readers’ recognition and acceptance of discourse content. Thematic themes can make it easier for readers to accept and identify with the Chinese national value constructed through discourse.

Among the 290 thematic themes, the thematic themes representing the poverty alleviation agencies (Chinese government, Chinese enterprises and so on) occur with the highest frequency, accounting for 31%. The second are the thematic themes representing the poverty stricken areas or people, accounting for 20%. There are 54 thematic themes representing poverty alleviation measures, accounting for 19%, and 26 key difficulties of poverty alleviation, making up 9%. There are 17 thematic themes representing the current situation of poverty, accounting for 6%, and 16 thematic themes representing poverty alleviation achievements, taking up 6%. The remaining themes less than ten are not for reference. The results are presented in tabular form as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme category</th>
<th>The agent of thematic themes</th>
<th>The number of themes</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic themes</td>
<td>Individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty alleviation measures</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty alleviation difficulties</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reality of poverty alleviation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The achievement of poverty alleviation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>261</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The thematic themes in the poverty alleviation editorial are explained closely around the individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs and the target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs, implying that governments at all levels in China are committed to the poverty alleviation undertake. This way of narration externally expresses how China carries out poverty alleviation work, with close attention to poverty stricken rural areas and also demonstrate many effective poverty alleviation measures for rural areas. In Editorials, a series of targeted poverty alleviation measures for rural areas are described in detail, which indicates China has spared no effort to share with the world successful poverty alleviation measures.

The thematic theme of the individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs appears most frequently, suggesting that the poverty alleviation editorial focuses on how the Chinese leadership is devoted to designing and implementing the plans and actions for poverty reduction. The thematic themes of individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs include the Communist Party of China, local governments at all levels, Chinese state leaders, government officials, state-owned enterprises, etc. The ma-
Majority of the relevant explanations of individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs mainly relate to how the governments at all levels, officials and state-owned enterprises respond to and implement the poverty alleviation policies issued by the Party Central Committee. It can be seen that the national poverty alleviation work is a process in which leaders at all levels cooperate with each other, actively carry out the tasks assigned by the central authorities, and jointly organize the poverty alleviation undertaken throughout the country. For example:

1) Almost all State-owned enterprises have established links with specific poverty-stricken counties to extend as much help as they can. They send staff to guide local poverty alleviation work. Governments at all levels also send officials to villages to help villagers to tap their own potential and make the best use of local resources to increase their incomes.

The thematic themes represent the target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs occur in the second high frequency, which expresses that the country is aware of the urgency of poverty relief in rural areas, and rural areas are the key objects of concern of the country. The most frequent thematic themes of the target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs are rural areas and rural people. In addition, thematic themes of the target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs also contain rural students, poverty stricken provinces, poverty stricken counties, South Asia, temporary workers, a person of a certain occupation, etc. It can be seen that the focus of national poverty alleviation lies in rural areas, and the development of rural areas is the key point of poverty alleviation. The state strives to revitalize the countryside, improve the imbalance between urban and rural development, and eliminating absolute poverty in rural areas. For example:

For China, a large agricultural country with a rural population of around 550 million, work concerning agriculture, rural areas and farmers has always been a top priority for the government.

The frequency of thematic themes of poverty alleviation measures relate to various Poverty Alleviation Policies, including rural modernization, infrastructure construction, and improving education in poverty stricken areas, is lower than that of the target of aid in the poverty alleviation programs, and the editorials explicitly introduce that the individuals/organizations participating in targeted poverty alleviation programs at all levels need to take corresponding measures against various poverty situations. The thematic themes of poverty alleviation key tenets occur only less than that of poverty alleviation measures, which manifests that the state has made a comprehensive analysis of the current poverty alleviation situation, summarized various obstacles in poverty alleviation, and formulated a series of poverty alleviation measures and policies according to the current poverty alleviation situation. The related expression of thematic themes of poverty alleviation achievements introduce China’s current contributions to poverty alleviation at home and abroad, and provides enlightenment for the cause of poverty alleviation around the world.

4.3 Analysis on Chinese mainstream values from the perspective of ideational function

Ideational function refers to language’s expression of people’s experiences in the real world (including the inner world) (Hu, Zhu, & Zhang, 1989:71). The transitivity system embodies the ideational function, and its center is the configuration between process verbs and participants in clauses, which reflects the main meaning that language users want to express. Transitivity analysis is a grammatical system that consists of six principal processes: The transitivity system includes six processes, namely, the material process (doing something), the mental process (feeling, cognition and other psychological activities), the relational process (the relationship between two things), the verbal process (telling and informing), the behavior process (physiological activities) and the existence process (the existing state of things) (Halliday, 1985).

Based on the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics, the chapter is centered in the transitive representation of Chinese mainstream values held by China in the fight against poverty in a quantitative and qualitative manner with the prescriptive discussion of poverty alleviation editorials. The statistics of the number and proportion of the six processes in the editorials on poverty alleviation are shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Six processes of the transitivity system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen from the above table that, material processes, describing activities that happen in the outside world of human beings (Saragih, 2010:7), accounts for approximately 59% of the whole poverty alleviation editorial, which dominates the corpus and is followed by the relational process. This usage feature is related to the genre and topic nature of the text. This corpus is a political text on the topic of poverty alleviation in China. It can be seen from the content that the editorials are mostly from an objective perspective, which reflects that the characteristics of the editorials are based on the occurrence of objective poverty alleviation events.

Considering the fact that the relational process and material process account for the vast majority in this lecture, the present study mainly focuses on the analysis of these two processes. There are 154 material process sentences in total, of which sentences’ actors are China (includes President Xi Jinping, the CPC, government at all levels, The State Council, government officials, state-owned enterprises) are 107, accounting for 74%, which all have goals. Goals contain making poverty alleviation plans, issuing poverty alleviation policies, solving poverty problems, illustrating poverty alleviation contributions, visiting impoverished areas and so on. For example:

(2) President Xi Jinping’s visit to Zhaojue county in Southwest China’s Sichuan province, one of the country’s most poverty-stricken counties, five days before Spring Festival, points to the importance China’s top leadership attaches to the poverty alleviation task.

(3) To correct this imbalance, the State Council, China’s Cabinet, issued a plan for the integrated development of urban and rural areas on Sunday, which puts greater emphasis on narrowing the institutional gap between urban and rural areas, so more rural residents can reap more benefits of reform and opening-up.

The extensive use of such material clauses shows that poverty alleviation editorials focus closely on the organization and implementation of domestic poverty alleviation issues under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee, that is, to tell the world “what China has done” or “how to alleviate poverty”.

Relational process refers to the process of defining the relationship between one object (such as person, thing, situation, event, etc.) and another object, or defining the nature, characteristics, situation, etc. (Huang, 2001:87). Out of the 93 relational clauses in poverty alleviation editorials, 63% are related to China (including party, government and state leaders). Such as:

(4) .....that explains why the Party, with more than 95 million members, is still full of vitality and radiating rays of hope.

(5) Under the CPC’s leadership, China has won its national independence, and developed to be the world’s second-largest economy.

(6) It has become a regular practice for Xi, who is also general secretary of the Party Central Committee, to visit poverty-stricken rural families immediately before Spring Festival.

We may safely conclude that poverty alleviation editorials use a large number of such relational clauses to represent Chinese mainstream values held by China in the fight against poverty as follows.

4.3.1 Strategic foresightedness and farsightedness

The collected editorials narrate China’s measures, imply its attitudes towards poverty by setting participants and relevant goals, and then achieve the discursively construction of China’s international value. China’s international value can be shown by the words and content of the editorial. The following paragraphs will analyze typical examples representing national value of material processes and relational processes.

(7) For those officials who are taking immediate care of poverty alleviation work, it is not just a matter of giving money or building new homes for impoverished villagers. They are supposed to help poverty-stricken villagers help themselves.

This example demonstrates the material process linguistically in the transitivity system of ideational function of describing an action of poverty alleviation in the real world. From the perspective of transitive analysis, the actor is “They (officials)”, the process is “to help poverty-stricken villagers help themselves”, which is a material process. It indicates that China is using a more effective and sustainable way to lift poverty, which is in addition to the single economic support, China has chosen to teach the people in poverty stricken areas the survival skills, so that they can earn money by themselves and maintain the results of poverty alleviation. This approach to poverty alleviation reflects China’s strategic foresightedness and farsightedness values.

4.3.2 Spirit of utter devotion

(8) It is cause for reflection to learn on the sixth national Poverty Alleviation Day, also the 27th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, that nationwide more than 770 officials had sacrificed their lives in the cause of
poverty relief by the end of June.

The sentence above uses the material process of the transitivity system if ideational function to describe the fact that a large number of officials have lost their lives in the engagement of eliminating poverty. Based on the transitive analysis of ideational function, it is found that the actor is “more than 700 officials”, the process of this sentence is “sacrifices their lives”. The circumstantial element of this sentence is “in the cause of poverty relief by the end of June”. The poverty situation in various parts of China is complex. It is necessary for the Party Central Committee to send poverty-eradication cadres to poverty-stricken areas to personally guide and carry out poverty relief work according to the actual situation. Since the campaign of targeted poverty relief was inaugurated in 2014, more than 3 million Party and government officials have been sent to poverty-stricken communities to make sure the "centennial goal" of eliminating poverty by 2020 is accomplished on time. The hero who has made the greatest contribution to the country is unknown. They do not require returns, but spare no effort to fight on the front line of poverty alleviation, sacrifice themselves for the great success of the country, and interpret the responsibilities of the Communist Party with ordinary perseverance and dedication. This example reflects the dedication of China’s poverty alleviation officials and the Chinese’s belief of the spirit of utter devotion.

4.3.3 Intelligent and rational analysis

(9) More importantly, the "decisive victory" against poverty marks a great leap toward the fulfillment of a key centennial goal of building a moderately well-off society in an all-around manner by this year’s end… President Xi, for one, has urged local authorities to continue helping those on low incomes even after their counties have got rid of the poverty label.

In this example, the material process describes that China will not be blinded by these achievements made in poverty alleviation undertake and will keep fighting for eliminating poverty. From the linguistic perspective, the Actor is “President Xi”, and the process is “has urged local authorities to continue helping those on low incomes”. The circumstantial element is “even after their counties have got rid of the poverty label.” When referring to the achievements, this sentence indicates that even if we have made great achievements, we still need to be vigilant at all times, and guard against the risk of poverty again in such a difficult environment. While making great achievements, the Chinese government can still remain rational and realistically analyze the poverty problem, always keep sober and deal with all difficulties, and successfully construct Chinese mainstream values took in poverty alleviation of intelligent and rational analysis.

4.3.4 Commitment to excellence

(10) In accordance with the United Nations’ poverty line of $1.9 per person per day, China’s contribution to the global poverty eradication efforts is more than 70 percent. China is also the first country to have fulfilled the UN’s poverty eradication goal ahead of schedule.

From the perspective of the transitivity system of ideational function, the relational process is used to classify or identify something or experience for a relation. This example of the relational process describes the constructions that China has made in Oct19, 2019. It is the relational process of “the Attribute”. The two pronouns “China’s contribution to the global poverty eradication efforts” and “China” in the following sentence are the Carrier to be specific. The Attribute here is “is more than 70 percent” and “is also the first country to have fulfilled the UN’s poverty eradication goal ahead of schedule”.

After eight years of continuous struggle, nearly 100 million poverty stricken people in China have been lifted out of poverty, and the goal and task of poverty alleviation in the new era have been completed as scheduled. Under the current standards, all the rural poor people have been lifted out of poverty, all the poor counties have been lifted from their hats, and absolute poverty and regional overall poverty have been eliminated. This means that China has achieved the poverty reduction goal of the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development 10 years ahead of schedule, and is the first country in the world to achieve the poverty reduction goal of the United Nations. It has successfully construct the Chinese’s stance and belief of pursuing excellence.

4.4 Analysis on national orientation from the perspective of interpersonal function

As the official voice tool of the party and the state, the editorial of China Daily is the clear voice of the newspaper in terms of information source or structure, topic selection and language use. According to the characteristics of editorial, it is a powerful and formal tool to initiate and spread the ideological movement facing the world. Therefore, the editorial language can reveal China’s orientation in the international and social relations. Through the
analysis of the mood system that embodies interpersonal functions in the discourse, we can see the strategies and characteristics of poverty alleviation editorials in constructing national value and international status.

4.4.1 Representative of the interests of the Chinese people

(11) Unlike typical political parties in the West which serve the interests of the wealthy few, the CPC always puts people first and pursues their fundamental interests. It is the Party’s flesh-and-blood connection with the people, which has guaranteed it their support both in good times and bad times.

Through the mood system of interpersonal function, this sentence is declarative mood. The declarative mood, the most common type of mood used in daily communication, is generally used to state facts objectively in order to increase the credibility of speech. This sentence mainly introduces China’s long-term attitude and policies towards the people, that is China has always been considering people as the first status and spare no effort to protect people’s fundamental interest.

(12) China has always considered being able to make a decent living a fundamental human right. All the rhetoric about other human rights is meaningless when people do not have the basic necessities of life.

This sentence belongs to declarative mood and explains: China is considering that a decent life is the highest priority human right that China must guarantee its people, which shows that China has made great determination in eradicating poverty and protecting the people’s basic living interests.

(13) With such visits, he is telling officials at all levels never to forget their mission of serving the people. He is telling them to rack their brains and do whatever they can to help the remaining some 30 million poverty stricken villagers in the country out of poverty.

Example 13 shows: After his regular visit to poverty-stricken rural families, President Xi Jinping’s demands to poverty alleviation officials, that is to ask them to keep in mind that they must do everything they can do to help poverty stricken people. Through the theory of mood system of interpersonal function, this sentence is imperative mood with the symbol of “he is telling officials”. On the other hand, this sentence also indicates President Xi’s eagerness of helping people, which reflects that China’s positive attitude of helping poor people.

Generally speaking, these three examples all express that China has always been attaches great importance to the interests of the people and describes the close relationship between the Chinese government and the people. China constantly observing the current situation of the people’s lives, paying attention to the interests of the people and the basic human rights of the people. China’s role of "giving" is very obvious, and a large number of statements are used. This discourse strategy not only reflects the solemn and objective attitude of the editorial language, but also conveys information to the international community in order to build China’s national orientation and reflect China’s determination to always take the people’s position as its fundamental political position. The editorial contents related to the interests of the people all take China (National leader, the CPC, the Chinese government) as the subject and take China as the core word. The following expressions are all expressions of how to ensure the interests of the people, indicating that China is in a proactive and responsible position in dealing with the interests of the people and in a leading position in protecting the interests of the people, and has built a national orientation of the representative of the interests of the Chinese people. The choice of the subject in the editorial is to highlight China’s positive role in safeguarding the people’s interests.

The supremacy of the people’s interests is the inherent requirement of the socialist system and the rule of law. China’s system and rule of law construction has firmly grasped the socialist direction and the people’s interests, thus demonstrating the advantages of the socialist system and the rule of law: Adhering to and improving the basic economic system with public ownership as the mainstay and the common development of various forms of ownership, not only ensures the nature of the socialist economic system and the people’s common prosperity, but also adapts to the development level of productive forces in the primary stage of socialism, stimulates the enthusiasm and creativity of the people, and conforms to the fundamental interests of the people. That means China will work for the interests of the overwhelming majority of people and uphold the supremacy of the interests of the people, which successfully shapes a national orientation of the representative of the interests of the Chinese people.

4.4.2 Global leader in poverty alleviation

China is the largest developing country in the world, accounting for one fifth of the world’s population. So far, China has created a miracle in the history of poverty reduction. China is the first country in the world to eradicate absolute poverty. When elaborating on the contents related to global poverty alleviation, the editorial mainly introduced China’s poverty alleviation achievements and their positive impact on the world. For example:
Feeding, clothing and sheltering 1.4 billion people is no easy job. But somehow China has managed to do it. And, in so doing, it has become the first developing country to accomplish the poverty reduction target of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—and done it 10 years ahead of schedule.

In examples (14), the declarative mood was used to explain the outstanding poverty alleviation constructions and the meaning of constructions to the whole world. This sentence explains that China has already eliminate extreme poverty in all poverty-striken areas in China, which is an unprecedented epic for the whole world. Despite the serious pandemic broke in Dec, 2019 which terribly effect the poverty alleviation undertakes in all countries, China was still able to withstand the pressure and announce the completion of China’s poverty alleviation goals as scheduled in 2020, and become the first developing country to accomplish the poverty reduction target of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. What’s more, China has accomplish it 10 years ahead of schedule. In this regard, in example (14), editorial stated the high capacity and the status of leadership of China in the global poverty alleviation undertake. As a country with a large population, China took the lead in achieving the UN poverty eradication goal. China’s poverty alleviation is an important part of the world’s poverty alleviation. Sub Saharan Africa, India, China and Latin America have become the main countries and regions where the world’s extremely poor people live. In the past few decades, the proportion of the world’s people living in extreme poverty has dropped from 40% to less than 10% at present. China has made the vast majority of contributions. China’s poverty alleviation experience is worth learning from developing countries. It shows that China can withstand the pressure from all sides, lead China out of poverty successfully, and build Chinese national orientation of the global leader in poverty alleviation.

4.4.3 Guardian of global interests

China’s poverty alleviation is not only focusing on domestic poverty, but also on international poverty alleviation. China has carefully analyzed the international poverty situation, and is always willing to share the successful domestic poverty alleviation policies. Several examples analyzed through interpersonal function are as follows:

(15) What China has achieved has not only contributed to the global endeavor to reduce poverty. It also provides successful experience that other countries can learn from. Although the causes of poverty in other countries may vary, China is more than willing to share the policies it has tried and tested and which has proved effective.

(16) The State Council Information Office released a white paper, China’s Practice in Poverty Reduction, on Tuesday which shares with the world how China has achieved its goal of eradicating abject poverty from the country.

According to interpersonal function, example (15) and (16) belong to declarative mood. The use of declarative mood in these two examples help to demonstrate that China’s fervent desire to share the effective and successful policies and measures of China’s poverty alleviation with the world. It also explained that China always wants to actively lend a helping hand to the world’s poverty stricken areas. As the largest developing country in the world, China’s experience in poverty reduction has also provided an important reference for other developing countries. China has been able to synchronize economic growth with poverty reduction and enable the poverty stricken people to share the fruits of economic development, which in itself provides a model for other developing countries to reduce poverty. While promoting its own poverty reduction process, China has always provided assistance to developing countries within its capabilities. China has established the China United Nations Fund for peace and development and the South South cooperation assistance fund, and has steadily promoted cooperation projects under the framework of the East Asia poverty reduction Cooperation Initiative and the China Africa poverty reduction and people benefit cooperation projects. China has built 24 agricultural technology demonstration centers in Africa, benefiting more than 500000 local people. China has also continuously deepened the joint efforts of the "the Belt and Road" and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. According to the World Bank report, the joint construction of the "the Belt and Road" is expected to help 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million people out of moderate poverty. China has also continued to help developing countries enhance their capacity-building through multilateral and bilateral channels and contribute to international cooperation in poverty reduction. With the use of declarative mood, poverty alleviation editorials successfully built a national orientation of the guardian of global interests.

5. Conclusion

At present, poverty, as a worldwide social problem, not only hinders economic development, but also deteriorate political stability and the progress of human civilization. As the main battlefield of the anti-poverty struggle, China
has carved a milestone in the history of global anti-poverty. On the occasion of winning the battle against poverty in an all-round way in 2020, national leaders of all generations have paid special attention to poverty alleviation and regarded it as a warm work. As the main official approach for China to transmit its voice to the whole world, editorial discourse analysis plays an important role of constructing Chinese national image. Therefore, based on the poverty alleviation discourse research, the author gave up the traditional poverty alleviation discourse research on poverty alleviation news and reports, and focused on the poverty alleviation discourse in the poverty alleviation editorial of the China Daily in a new way, so that to find the discourse power in the media narration and political communication from the linguistic direction.

Drawing on the three metafunctions theory of systemic functional linguistics, this paper systematically analyzes the editorial on the theme of poverty alleviation in the China daily from the perspectives of theme, transitivity and mood, and reveals how the discourse are used to build China’s national images. After decades of poverty alleviation, China, under the leadership of the government, has no fear to solve poverty difficulties, and made internationally renowned achievements in poverty alleviation, providing a reference for the world’s poverty alleviation. In front of the international stage, the poverty alleviation editorial introduced the process of poverty alleviation in China, the successful cases and measures of poverty alleviation.

From the analysis of textual function, it can be seen that Chinese all levels of governments attach prior importance to the stricken population in remote rural areas. From the ideational function, we can see that the mainstream values held by China in the fight against poverty are interpreted as “strategic foresightedness and farsightedness,” “intelligent and rational analysis”, “commitment to excellence” and “spirit of utter devotion”. From the interpersonal function, with a rational, gentle, firm and helpful attitude, the national orientation of China as the representative of the Chinese people, the leader of global poverty alleviation and the guardian of the interests of the whole world are displayed through editorials according to declarative mood to the whole world. The construction process of national orientation shows China’s unceasing pursuit of the undertaking of poverty alleviation and the useful and specific poverty alleviation method of "people-oriented". China has always been spared no effort to contribute to the people and actively helped the poverty stricken areas in the whole world. China is developing rapidly in the world, so that the analysis of the political discourse of Chinese Editorials helps to accurately tell the Chinese story to the world, transmit the Chinese voice, and help the world better understands China, so as to strengthen the friendly exchanges between the world and China, and enhance China’s discourse power and political communication ability in the world.

References


