

A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis of Huawei's Image in the GCC Media

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Abstract: This study has employed WordSmith Tools Version 8.0 to investigate how Huawei, a well-known Chinese corporation, is represented in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) media from a corpus-based critical discourse analysis perspective. The research shows that Huawei is positively constructed in most cases in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. That is, Huawei is a global leader in the field of communication and information technology, new technology, mobile phone market, wireless services, smart city innovation and 5G network. However, the image of Huawei has been sometimes distorted in the GCC mainstream English newspapers.

1. Introduction

WordSmith Tools Version 8.0 ^[1] is a lexical analysis software developed by Mike Scott from the University of Liverpool. It provides a number of functions by which the behaviors of words in a text can be examined. Concord, KeyWords and WordList are its three main functions that are designed to allow researchers to conduct linguistic analysis. Since the development of this software, it has become a very useful and powerful tool for discourse analysis. This study will employ WordSmith Tools Version 8.0 to examine the image of Huawei Corporation constructed in the GCC mainstream English newspapers.

2. Literature Review

The research on corporate image can be dated back to Boulding's study ^[2] in which image was defined as an organizational and receiver construct in the 1950s. Corporate image has long been studied from the perspectives of advertising, marketing, and business management ^[3]. Corporate image is often viewed as corporate brand that is an intangible asset of a company ^[4]. A strong positive corporate brand image not only helps a company to achieve a competitive advantage but also encourages repeat purchases of its products ^[5].

Corporate image can also be understood at the material level and at the symbolic level. Corporate image at the material level refers to the public's cognition and views about the corporate due to its actions or the development; and corporate image at the symbolic level refers to the image represented in what the corporate has said or the public's comments on it ^[6]. In such a highly commercialized and competitive era, corporate image plays a very important role in its development. Dowlin's study ^[7] shows that a good corporate image can reduce business cost and increase the market share.

In recent years, scholars begin to employ discourse analysis theory to explore corporate image represented at the symbolic level. Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis model ^[8], Hu & Sheng ^[6] investigated the image of Huawei represented in the English translation version of *Sustainable Development Report of Huawei*. The findings indicate that Huawei is pragmatic, enterprising and approachable, and gives priority to environmental protection and the well-being of people. Liao ^[9] draws upon Systemic Functional Linguistics and visual grammar to analyze how Huawei uses the language and images in its corporate social responsibility reports. The findings demonstrate that Huawei is a responsible corporation. Both studies mentioned above investigate how Huawei's image is constructed in its own documents. This study will explore how the image of Huawei is represented in the news media because the news media play a vital role in

the construction and dissemination of the image. Besides, the news media are one of the key channels for the public around the world to stay informed. Up to my knowledge, no study has been conducted on how the news media in the GCC mainstream English newspapers report Huawei.

3. Theoretical Framework: Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis

This study attempts to use corpus-based critical discourse analysis approach to investigate how Huawei, a famous Chinese corporation with international reputation, is represented in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. A corpus-based approach is illuminating for discovering repeated patterns used in the discourses, while a critical discourse analysis (CDA) is best suited for examining specific stretches of the discourses^[10]. Hardt-Mautner^[11] and Stubbs^[12] are the leading pioneers in integrating corpus linguistics with CDA. Over the past 20 years, the practice of using CL methods in CDA has become increasingly popular, which is characterized by an emphasis on the “synergy” of CL and CDA in the analysis^[13]. The present study will adopt the corpus-based critical discourse analysis approach to examine how the image of Huawei is discursively represented in the mainstream English newspapers in the GCC countries. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following two research questions: (1) What salient language patterns did the GCC-CNC employ when reporting Huawei? (2) What image of Huawei is constructed through the use of salient language patterns in the GCC mainstream English newspapers?

4. Research Methodology

This study is based on a self-built corpus that is comprised of China-related news reports in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. I used the online news repository LexisNexis to collect the data and the time period was from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2020. With the factors such as the collection time of each newspaper in LexisNexis, the readership and the influence power of the newspapers taken into account, six target newspapers are selected. They are as follows: Saudi Arabia’s *Arab news* and *Saudi Gazette*, the UAE’s *Gulf News* and *Khaleej Times* as well as Qatar’s *Gulf Times* and *The Peninsula*. I decided to collect the news containing “China” or “Chinese” at least three times in the headlines and leads to ensure that the news reports extracted were closely related to China; besides, news reports whose titles contained the words with Chinese characteristics, such as President Xi and Kung Fu, were also included in this self-built corpus. After all the China-related news reports were downloaded from the LexisNexis database, I first cleaned the data, such as deleting the copyright and the classification description of the news as well as the images attached to the news in the LexisNexis database. Based on Paul Baker’s suggestions^[14], I conducted the concordance analysis using the high frequent word “and” as the node word in order to find out the highly similar news reports. I deleted these highly similar news reports manually. Finally, I converted all the news reports into TXT documents to meet the format requirements of the corpus analysis software WordSmith Tools. This self-built corpus has 6988 articles with a total of 3,813,926 tokens. I decide to analyze the image of Huawei corporation because of two reasons: first, *Huawei* and *Huawei’s* occur very frequently in this self-built corpus, 1802 and 317 times respectively; second, the Log likelihood values of the keywords *Huawei* and *Huawei’s* are very high in the keywords list, 11888.79 and 2091.42 respectively.

5. Results and Discussion

As is mentioned in the introduction part, WordSmith Tools Version 8.0^[1] provides a number of functions by which the behavior of words in a text can be analyzed. Concord, KeyWords and WordList are its three main functions that researchers can employ to conduct linguistic analysis. This study mainly makes use of the Concord function, which allows researchers to generate collocates that can be used as a starting point for linguistic analysis. The research output will be obtained and modified with the help of the concordance analysis.

The analysis of the image of Huawei started from generating its collocates in the GCC

mainstream English newspapers. I calculated the collocates of *Huawei* within a span of five words to the left and the right of it. I decide to particularly look at the collocates required by both MI score (≥ 3) and T-score (≥ 2) because the former measures how strongly the two words are attracted to each other, and the latter measures how much confidence we have to claim there is some association. The content collocates that satisfy the above criteria will be the starting point of my analysis on Huawei's image constructed in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. Table 1 shows the significant content collocates of Huawei, and they are classified into several groups according to their grammatical categories.

Table 1 The Significant Content Collocates of Huawei

Category	Significant Content Collocates
Adjective	giant, leading, world's, global;
Noun	Zhengfei, Wanzhou, handsets, Mate, telecoms, skill, technologies, smartphones, telecom, Meng, Xiaomi, smartphone, telecommunications, flagship, Samsung, tech, phones, devices, executives, device, store, Lenovo, equipment, Apple, maker, networks, brand, shipments, employees, consumer, founder, mobile, series, competition, phone, communications, solutions, Shenzhen, officer, sanctions, leader;
Verb	banned, launch, launched, announced, developed, using, continue, said;
Preposition	against;

Among its significant content collocations, the noun *leader* shows that the GCC mainstream English newspapers employ the discursive strategy of nomination to label Huawei as an industry leader [15]. *Huawei* has collocated with *leader* 13 times in this self-built corpus. Figure 1 is the screenshot when they occur together in the news reports. The concordance analysis indicates that *leader* is often modified by the adjectives *global* or *world* in the news reports, representing Huawei as a global industry leader or an industry leader in the world. Two samples are selected to illustrate the point.

(1) "As a global leader in the ICT industry, Huawei has the capability to support Al Jaber to deliver the most advanced technology in Qatar and achieve internationalization at a faster pace." (*The Peninsula*, 15 January 2019)

(2) "Huawei is a world leader in developing Media Cloud Solutions, Al Jazeera Media Network wants to ensure we can also have a state of the art of media processing resources for computing, storage, migration, and management." (*Arab News*, 12 February 2017)

In Extract 1, the Chairman of Qatar's well-known company *Al-Jaber Group* expressed his attitude toward Huawei as a global leader in the ICT industry. He appraised Huawei in a very positive way. In Extract 2, Abdulla Al-Najjar, executive director of global brand and communications, *Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN)*, signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Huawei to explore possible avenues of cooperation to transform the network's online platform using Huawei's media cloud solutions because Huawei is a world leader in developing Media Cloud Solutions.



Figure 1 The Screenshot of the Significant Collocate *leader*

My analysis of Huawei's image will focus on the adjective content collocates because the adjectives have the most evaluative meanings. Among the top 100 significant collocates, the adjective content ones are as follows: *giant*, *leading*, *world's* and *global*. The adjective *giant* has collocated with *Huawei* 53 times, among which "giant Huawei" has occurred 48 times, so we may

conclude that “giant Huawei” is the most general image represented by the GCC mainstream English newspapers. The collocates *leading* and *world's* occur with *Huawei* 21 times respectively. Figure 2 and Figure 3 are the screenshots of the concordance lines when *leading* and *world's* collocate with *Huawei*. The concordance analysis shows that they mainly express the meaning that Huawei is a world leading Chinese corporation in the field of information technology. That is, it is a global leader in communication and information technology, new technologies, mobile phone market, wireless services, smart city innovation and 5G network.

N	Concordance
1	:7889 words Mark Xue speaks in panel discussion. — Courtesy photo BEIJING, China — Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT)
2	in telecom and enterprise networks, devices and cloud computing. At the HCC2015, Huawei has shown its leading stance in the IT industry in cloud digital transformation by
3	Byline: The Peninsula The officials during the event. DOHA: Al-Jaber Group has chosen Huawei, the leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT)
4	in a 5G system will be transmitted to a central location and be processed there. China's Huawei has taken a leading role in 5G development. It has made substantial contributions
5	Guangzhou servicing 17 cities. Earlier this year, Dubai Tourism signed an agreement with Huawei, one of China's leading smartphone manufacturers. In January which pre-loads
6	ceremony, al-Subaey said, "We are glad to bring to Qatar a leading Chinese brand like Huawei through our new partnership. The Shenzhen, Guangdong, headquartered
7	complicated than ever, and downward pressure on the global economy has intensified." Huawei is the world's leading maker of equipment that powers cellphone networks and a
8	Dubai Internet City (DIC) – whose partners include leading Chinese companies such as Huawei, UnionPay, China Telecom Middle East and Oceanblue Cloud – is at the forefront
9	and management of industrial cities in the Kingdom and to harness solar energy. Huawei, a leading global ICT solutions provider, on Wednesday received an investment
10	was heading to China to sign agreements with a number of leading companies, including Huawei, in a bid to lure more Chinese tourists to the emirate. Confirming this report, Dubai
11	Only basic services would be available, making Huawei phones less desirable. Separately, Huawei is the world's leading provider of networking equipment, but it relies on US
12	have turned over such property to border patrol agents. In the years leading up to the Huawei indictment, U.S. officials had been capturing information that would influence the
13	of Twenty summit in Japan, the president agreed to lift some of the sanctions against Huawei, leading other leaders to conclude that the sanctions were based on US economic
14	words Byline: Himendra Mohan Kumar Staff Reporter Shenzhen, China: China-based Huawei, a leading global information and communications technology (ICT) solutions
15	companies. Today, we signed a partnership deal with one of the leading companies, Huawei, to develop and establish the smart city innovation center - which is the first of its
16	meeting in Japan at the end of June. But in the meantime, the US has moved to sanction Huawei, the world's leading telecom company, an action that could be a prelude to a
17	Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs to China. Huawei - a leading global ICT solutions provider - received on Aug. 31, 2016 an
18	Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) on Sunday announced a strategic partnership with Huawei India, a leading ICT solutions brand from China. Huawei India will be the principal
19	technologies. Huawei is a name you should know. As China's leading telecoms company, Huawei is the global leader in the race to build 5G networks, followed by the European
20	Commerce and Al Jaber Group at the opening of the company's office in West Bay. Doha Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT)
21	third in the world in mobile phone shipments in 2016. As a leading technology company, Huawei invests a significant amount of its annual sales revenue to research and

Figure 2 The Screenshot of the Significant Collocate *leading*

N	Concordance
1	achieved the highest year-over-year growth among the world's top five - Samsung, Huawei, Apple and Chinese smartphone makers OPPO and Vivo. Huawei sold 58.4
2	in Japan at the end of June. But in the meantime, the US has moved to sanction Huawei, the world's leading telecom company, an action that could be a prelude to
3	almost instantly, even over cellphone networks. What is Huawei's role in 5G? Huawei is one of the world's biggest producers of telecommunications equipment,
4	in Europe, estimates Gartner analyst Annette Zimmermann. That formula helped Huawei establish itself as the world's second-largest seller of smartphones during
5	high-tech surveillance, or to keep her in jail, according to some legal experts. Huawei is one of the world's biggest telecommunications hardware companies.
6	more likely to have a better economy and stronger consumer spending power." Huawei is now the world's third-largest smartphone maker, accounting for nearly
7	of \$32.4 billion (Dh119.16 billion), a year-on-year increase of 11.7 per cent. Huawei provides 45 of the world's top 50 telecommunications operators with unified
8	services would be available, making Huawei phones less desirable. Separately, Huawei is the world's leading provider of networking equipment, but it relies on US
9	by itself, but more than ever before. China's government and companies including Huawei Technologies Co, the world's largest maker of 5G equipment; China Mobile
10	(Dubai Tourism) said Monday that it had signed an agreement with China's Huawei, one of the world's largest technology firms, at a meeting between the pair
11	deeper than whatever US-originated equipment Huawei may have sold to Iran. Huawei is described as the world's largest supplier of cellular tower electronics and
12	than ever, and downward pressure on the global economy has intensified." Huawei is the world's leading maker of equipment that powers cellphone networks
13	and kept innovation in marketing plans. After the launch of Huawei P10 series, Huawei partnered with the world's most renowned fashion magazine VOGUE and
14	reut.rs/2sRL7Ve and here reut.rs/2sUq8RT to read the stories. A spokesman for Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, has denied the
15	be the No. 3 smartphone vendor in the world with 15 per cent market share by 2015. Huawei is currently the world's sixth-biggest maker of mobile phones. In the Middle
16	to be the third-largest smartphone vendor with 15 per cent market share by 2015. Huawei is currently the world's sixth-biggest maker of mobile phones. In the Middle
17	dominated by Samsung and Apple, with the launch of Huawei Mate S smartphone. Huawei, the world's third largest smartphone maker, has unveiled its first high-end
18	Staff Reporter Dubai: Despite a recent spell of Western cyber security accusations, Huawei - one of the world's largest vendors of information and communication
19	. The move came amid a U.S. campaign to exert pressure on its allies not to use Huawei, the world's biggest maker of telecommunications network equipment, over
20	"sincerity" for trade talks to resume after President Donald Trump's moves against Huawei stoked tensions between the world's top two economies. Commerce
21	Mate 20 series, as well as the Honor 10. In the second and third quarters of 2018, Huawei became the world's second largest smartphone manufacturer, with a global

Figure 3 The Screenshot of the Significant Collocate *world's*

The adjective *global* has collocated with *Huawei* 37 times and occurred in all the R1-R5 slots to the search word *Huawei*. When *global* occurs in the R1 position, it forms the linguistic pattern *Huawei Global Government Affairs* to refer to one of Huawei's products. When *global* occurs in the R2 and R3 positions, it mainly forms the linguistic patterns *Huawei, a/the+(leading/biggest/first)+global+NP*, such as “a (leading) global ICT solutions provider (6)”, “a (leading) global provider of ICT infrastructure and smart devices (5)”, “the global leader in next-generation 5G mobile technology/in the race to build 5G network (2)”, “the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and Internet companies” and “China's first global tech brand”, etc. When *global* occurs in the R4 and R5 positions, we often see the following expressions, such as “among the global leaders in 5G”, “a global leader”, “drive global smart phone sales”, “the biggest global supplier”, “the biggest global maker” and “the number two global smart phone vendor”. Based on the foregoing analysis, we may conclude that Huawei is depicted as a leading global ICT solutions provider, a leading global provider of ICT infrastructure and smart devices as well as the global leader in 5G mobile technology in the GCC mainstream English newspapers.

Besides the adjective collocates, I have analyzed the content collocates *banned*, *against* and *sanctions*. They generally refer to the accusations and sanctions against Huawei by western countries under the leadership of the United States. The verb collocate *banned* occurs with *Huawei* 10 times, among which *Huawei* functions as the goal of the banning action 9 times, and the actor is *America*, *Japan* and *Australia*. The preposition *against* collocates with *Huawei* 41 times, and it occurs the most frequently in the L1 position (25 times), forming the linguistic patterns as follows: *accusations/actions/allegation/attacks/campaign/case/(criminal)charges/diatribe/investigation/move(s)/sanctions/threats/against Huawei*. The concordance analysis shows that the actor of actions listed

above are U.S., the U.S. Justice Department, the U.S. Attorney's office, Washington and Trump. The specific reasons of accusations against Huawei are as: stealing trade secrets from T-Mobile, spying, intellectual property theft, wire fraud and conspiracy to obstruct grand jury. When the noun collocates *sanctions* occurs with *Huawei*, it expresses the meanings of American sanctions against Huawei in most cases. These expressions have greatly destroyed Huawei's image although that is not the case. Two sample sentences are selected as follows.

(3) "There are also wider accusations against Huawei, including stealing trade secrets from T-Mobile, a competitor. 'There is sufficient evidence to be put before an extradition judge for decision,' the Justice Department said in a statement." (*Gulf Times*, 2 March 2019)

(4) Besides sanctions-busting, charges against Huawei include: spying, intellectual property theft, wire fraud and conspiracy to obstruct grand jury. The most serious U.S. allegation, however, is that Huawei was used by China to spy on America and its allies. (*Gulf News*, 29 January 2019)

Extract 3 is the Justice Department's statement on the accusations against Huawei. Extract 4 lists the specific U.S. allegations against Huawei. The two extracts indicate that the image of Huawei has been sometimes severely distorted in the GCC mainstream English newspapers.

6. Conclusion

This study has employed the corpus-based critical discourse analysis approach to investigate how Huawei was represented in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. The findings indicate that Huawei is positively constructed in most cases in the GCC media. On the one hand, Huawei is a global leader in the field of communication and information technology, new technology, mobile phone market, wireless services, smart city innovation and 5G network; On the other hand, the image of Huawei has been sometimes severely distorted in the GCC mainstream English newspapers. Some western countries, especially U.S., Japan and Australia, banned the use of Huawei, accusing it of stealing the competitors' trade secrets and intellectual property rights, etc. This study is of great practical significance for the promotion of Huawei's image in the GCC countries and even in the whole world. However, this paper just used the significant content collocates of *Huawei* as the starting point of research. The future research may explore the image of Huawei by analyzing high frequency words, metaphors and the use of the typical syntactic structures, etc in the news reports.

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