*Original Paper*

# Discourse Analysis of Attitude Resources in News Discourse from the Perspective of Appraisal Theory: A Case Study of *The Economists* and *Allafrica* on the Belt and Road Initiative

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*Abstract*

*Using the attitude system within the framework of appraisal theory, this study collected news reports on the "Belt and Road" initiative published in 2023 by the UK's The Economists and Africa's Allafrica platform. The study analyzed the attitude resources expressed in these reports and compared the similarities and differences in attitude expression between the two. The research found that in terms of the polarity of attitude resources, The Economists predominantly used negative resources, primarily expressing concerns and doubts about the BRI, but also affirming the initiative to a certain extent. On the other hand, Allafrica predominantly used positive resources, emphasizing the positive contributions of BRI to the economic development and infrastructure construction of African countries. Despite the significant differences in the use of attitude resources between the two media, both conveyed their specific attitudes toward the initiative through the frequent use of judgment resources and appreciation resources. This difference reflects the positions and perspectives of media from different national and cultural backgrounds in reporting on international economic cooperation.*

*Keywords*

*Appraisal Theory, Discourse Analysis, Attitude Resources, News Discourse, The Belt and Road Initiative*

## 1. Introduction

In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the "Belt and Road Initiative" (abbreviated as BRI), aiming to build a new "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road". The BRI relies on the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms between China and relevant countries, utilizes the existing effective regional cooperation platforms, and takes advantage of the

historical symbol of the ancient Silk Road. It holds high the banner of peaceful development, actively promotes economic cooperation with partners, and jointly builds a community with a shared future featuring political mutual trust, economic integration, and cultural inclusiveness. Jointly building the "Belt and Road" conforms to the fundamental interests of the international community, demonstrates the common ideals and pursuits of human society, is an active exploration of new models of international cooperation and global governance, and will inject new positive energy into world peace and development.

In the Appraisal Theory system, attitude resources are important language resources for expressing emotions and value judgments, which can reveal the emotional attitude and stance behind the news text. By analyzing the use of attitude resources in the news reports on the "Belt and Road Initiative" of different countries, we can more deeply understand the implicit meaning in the news reports, identify the attitudinal tendencies of various media in different countries, thereby better judging the reliability and objectivity of the information, and also understand the social significance of the construction of attitude resources in the "Belt and Road" news discourse.

Since the appraisal theory can systematically analyze the emotions and attitude resources in the text, and then reveal the potential stance in the news reports, therefore, this article takes the attitude system in the appraisal theory as the theoretical framework to explore the use of attitude resources in the BRI related news reports in one of the mainstream Western media, *The Economists*, and one of the mainstream African media, *Allafrica*, and adopts a mixed research method to analyze the distribution patterns and similarities and differences of attitude resources in the news reports on the BRI in *The Economists* and *Allafrica*. The study aims to reveal the emotions and value judgments reflected in the reports of different media on the Belt and Road Initiative through comparative analysis, and then understand the attitudinal tendencies of the media towards this initiative.

## 2. Literature Review

In the 1990s, linguists including Martin and White laid the theoretical framework of the Appraisal System on the basis of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Martin and Rose (2003) defined the Appraisal Theory as "system of interpersonal meanings concerning appraisal, that is, the negotiated attitudes in discourse, the intensity of feelings involved, and the various ways of indicating values and aligning readers". The appraisal theory is an important part in discourse analysis, providing an effective perspective for understanding language phenomena (Dong, 2019). It is a new lexical-grammatical framework developed in the study of interpersonal meaning in Functional Linguistics, which focuses on various negotiable attitudes in the discourse (Li, 2004).

The use of the Appraisal Theory in news reports can present the attitude, stance, and viewpoint of the news reporters (Li & Sun, 2007). This theory contains three main systems - the Attitude System, the Engagement System, and the Graduation System, among which the attitude system is at its core. The attitude system involves the emotional and value judgments made by the participants in the

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communication process, including three subsystems: affect, judgement, and appreciation, and each subsystem has both positive and negative aspects in terms of evaluation meaning. The following is a detailed description of the three dimensions of the attitude system.

Affect resources are resources for explaining language phenomena, used to explain the emotional responses of language users to behaviors, texts, processes, and phenomena. They can be further divided into "quality" (usually expressed by adjectives), "process" (usually expressed by clauses), and "comment" (usually expressed by adverbs or modal adverbs) (Chen & Wen, 2013). According to the classification of Martin and White (2005), the aspect of process affect includes four subcategories: happiness/unhappiness, security/insecurity, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and inclination/disinclination (Martin, 2000). Un/happiness contains psychological emotions such as sadness, resentment, and happiness, which involves the mood of feeling of joy or sorrow, among which happiness can be divided into cheer and affection, and unhappiness can be divided into misery and antipathy. In/security involves emotions related to ecological and social well-being and interpersonal relations, including anxiety, fear, confidence, and trust, among which security can be subdivided into confidence and trust, and insecurity can be divided into disquiet and surprise. Dis/satisfaction involves emotions related to goal pursuit, such as burnout, dissatisfaction, curiosity, and respect. Satisfaction can be divided into interest and pleasure, while dissatisfaction can be divided into ennui and displeasure.

Judgement resources are used to clarify emotional language phenomena, evaluating the behavior of language users from the perspective of moral standards. They can be further divided into social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem assesses whether a person's behavior complies with behavioral norms, their ability and talent to act accordingly, and their determination and tenacity. Social esteem often plays an important role in oral communication such as casual conversations (Eggins & Slade, 1997), and this kind of assessment includes normality, capability, and tenacity. On the other hand, social sanction delves deeper into the legal and moral dimensions to judge whether a person's behavior is genuine and complies with legal and moral standards (Yang, 2021). Social sanction is more common in written forms, serving as decrees, rules, regulations, and laws to punish those who violate the regulations, and this dimension includes the assessment of veracity and propriety.

Appreciation resources, as aesthetic resources, are used to clarify language phenomena, and explore in depth the inherent aesthetic qualities of texts, processes, and phenomena by language users (Liu, 2013). This system includes three subsystems: reaction, composition, and valuation. Reaction is related to whether the text or process attracts attention and evokes emotional responses. Composition concerns to the reader's perception of the proportional balance and details in the text or process. Valuation relates to the reader's assessment of the embedded social meaning within the text or process (Martin, 2000).

In recent years, there have been many academic studies on BRI. In the field of journalism and communication, An and Liang (2018) took the relevant reports regarding the Belt and Road International Cooperation Forum, focusing on explicit news elements and implicit framing structures. In the field of linguistics, Xiao et al. (2019) utilized critical discourse analysis to examine the narrative

differences of the BRI between mainstream Chinese and American media. Liu and Zhang (2020) relied on the attitude system in the Appraisal Theory, combined with the structure of the news text, to analyze the attitudinal performance of the BRI reports in *China Daily* and its distribution pattern in different parts of the text.

Although the news reports on BRI have become the focus of academic attention, the related research from the perspective of African media remains a relatively blank area, especially the comparative analysis research with the media reports of Western countries is relatively rare. Analyzing the news reports related to BRI in other countries with the help of the Appraisal Theory helps to deeply understand how media and governments in different nations perceive the initiative. In addition, appraisal theory helps to analyze the emotional tone and values in the reports, which provide understanding of the emotional projection of the reporters towards the initiative and the ideological factors behind the coverage. Therefore, this study takes the news reports on the BRI in two mainstream media in the West and Africa as the research objects, employs the attitude system under the appraisal theory to analyze the corpora, and puts forward the following research questions:

1)　　What is the distribution of attitude resources in the news reports about the Belt and Road Initiative from *The Economist* and *Allafrica*?

2)　　What similarities and differences exist in the usage of attitude resources between *The Economist* and *Allafrica* in their coverage of the Belt and Road Initiative?

## 3. Methods

*3.1 Corpus Source*

This study conducts discourse analysis on news reports on the BRI by two mainstream media in the UK and Africa, *The Economist* and *Allafrica*. It analyzes and compares the frequency of use of attitudinal resources by the two media. First, the researcher entered the keyword "the Belt and Road Initiative" on the official websites of *The Economist* (https://www.economist.com/) and *Allafrica* (https://Allafrica.com/latest/) to search and download all relevant news texts published from October to December 2023. Eleven news reports were found on the official website of *The Economist*, and 40 news reports were found on the official website of *Allafrica*. Considering the difference in word counts in the reports from the two media sources, in order to ensure comparability in qualitative and quantitative analysis, the researcher randomly selected seven reports from the 40 reports obtained on the official website of *Allafrica*, ultimately establishing a dataset comprising 11 articles from *The Economist* and 7 articles from *Allafrica* for analysis. This resulted in a small corpus for examination, with the total word count for The Economist's articles being 9,554 words and that for *Allafrica*'s articles being 9,820 words, leading to a combined total of 19,374 words.

The selection of *The Economist* as the representative of Western media is due to its status as a renowned international news magazine covering various fields such as global politics, economy, business, technology, and culture. Since its founding in September 1843 by James Wilson in the UK,

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*The Economist* has gained the trust of many readers with its unique viewpoints, questioning perspectives, in-depth investigative analysis, and independent and global outlook (Zheng & Zhang, 2015). *Allafrica* is chosen as the representative of African media as it is an online news website of African news agencies, widely reporting on life, politics, culture, and current affairs across the African continent. As the collective voice of African countries, *Allafrica* is particularly suitable for studying the construction of China's image in African media (Liu & Mao, 2020). Therefore, the articles on the official websites of *The Economist* and *Allafrica* possess certain authority and influence.

*3.2 Research Procedures*

After establishing a small-scale target corpus, the researcher employed a research method combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis elucidated the use of attitudinal resources in the discourse of the two news media and compared their similarities and differences. Quantitative analysis presented the specific distribution of attitudinal resources.

This study first classified and annotated the attitudinal resources in the corpus according to the attitude system in appraisal theory. The researcher utilized UAM Corpus Tool 3 as the corpus annotation tool and manually annotated the attitude resources in the sample news based on the selected analysis framework (see Figure 1), which was informed by Martin and White's (2005) attitude system theory. Through in-depth analysis of the evaluation strategies and attitudinal stances of The Economist and Allafrica towards the initiative, the researcher compared and analyzed the usage of attitude resources in the news reports from both media outlets, analyzing their similarities and differences. After annotation, the occurrence frequency of various attitudinal resources in the two media was presented in the form of data statistics to show quantitative data.
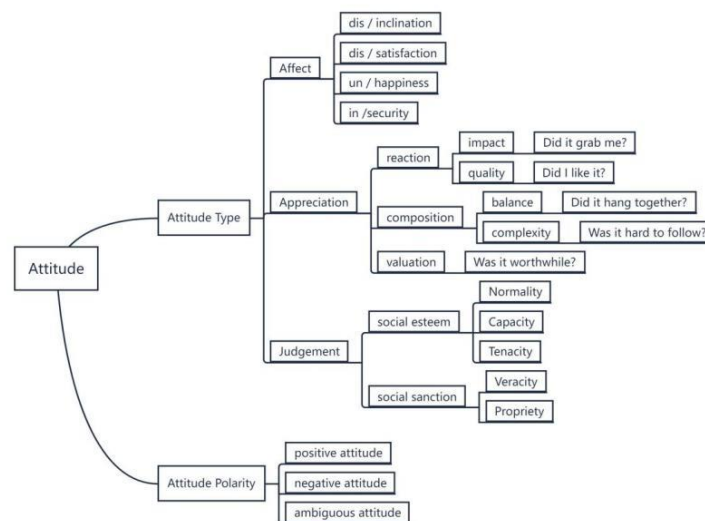


**Figure 1. Analytical Framework Used in UAM Corpus Tool 3**

**4. Results**

*4.1 Overall Distribution of Attitude Resources*

Although news reports pursue objectivity, the ideology and emotions of journalists may still affect the way different media present events (Mirzaaghabeyk, 2022). In the news reports of two media, there are still differences in the specific distribution of attitude resources.

4.1.1 Distribution of Attitude Resource Subcategories

**Table 1. Distribution of Total Attitude Resources in the News Discourses**

| Data Resources | Affect | Judgment | Appreciation | Total Number of Attitude Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *The Economist* | 51 (32.28%) | 49 (31.01%) | 58 (36.71%) | 158 (100%) |
| *Allafrica* | 29 (13.74%) | 74 (35.07%) | 108 (51.18%) | 211 (100%) |

Table 1 showed the use of attitude resources in the news reports of *The Economist* and *Allafrica*. As can be seen from the data in the table, there were obvious differences in the use of attitude resources between *The Economist* and *Allafrica*. The use of the three subcategories in *The Economist* was relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of appreciation resources (36.71%). This indicated that *The Economist* focuses more on evaluating the quality, importance, and value of the topics it reports. Conversely, *Allafrica* significantly focused on using appreciation resources (51.18%), followed by judgment resources (35.07%), and finally affect resources (13.74%). This suggested that *Allafrica* not only evaluated the topics it reported but also judged the actions and characters related to it. In addition, *The Economist* used about twice as much affect resources as *Allafrica*, indicating that *Allafrica* was more focused on describing and analyzing news events rather than incorporating emotional factors into its reports, in contrast to *The Economist*.

In general, *The Economist* was relatively balanced in the distribution of the three categories but slightly leaned towards appreciation resources. This indicated that its reporting style was relatively comprehensive, paying attention to both emotional influences and judgments and evaluations of events and people. *Allafrica*, on the other hand, significantly emphasized appreciation resources, which may indicate that its reporting paid more attention to analyzing and explaining the background and significance of news events rather than emotional rendering.

4.1.2 Distribution of Attitude Resource Polarities

**Table 2. Distribution of Attitude Resource Polarities in the News Discourses**

| Data Resources | Positive | Negative | Ambiguous | Total Number of Attitude Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *The Economist* | 59 (37.34%) | 90 (56.96%) | 9 (5.70%) | 158 (100%) |
| *Allafrica* | 204 (96.68%) | 4 (1.90%) | 3 (1.42%) | 211 (100%) |

Attitude resources can be further classified according to positive, negative, or ambiguous evaluations (Martin & White, 2005). Table 2 showed the distribution of attitude resources with different polarities of the two media institutions. It could be seen that *The Economist* and *Allafrica* had obvious differences in the polarity use of attitude resources. The negative attitude of *The Economist* accounted for a relatively high proportion (56.96%), tending to have a more conservative and negative attitude towards reports related to the BRI, emphasizing the concerns or risks related to it. While *Allafrica* was mainly positive (96.68%), reflecting African media's acceptance and support of the BRI, conveying more optimistic and constructive news information, and emphasizing the potential benefits related to the Initiative. Moreover, the use of ambiguous attitude resources was relatively rare,, indicating cautiousness by both media outlets in avoiding conveying unclear information in news reports.

In general, *Allafrica* clearly tended to use positive attitude resources, suggesting a more optimistic reporting style that may pay more attention to positive events and positive impacts. *The Economist*, on the other hand, was more inclined to use negative attitude resources, emphasizing the problems and negative impacts in news events, thus triggering readers' thinking and reactions, although it also had positive evaluations of the initiative. This difference reflected the different attitudes of the two media in news reporting towards BRI.

*4.2 Comparative Analysis of Attitude Resources in The Economist and Allafrica News*

4.2.1 Comparative Analysis of Affect Resource Distribution

Affect resources can be further divided into positive and negative emotions (Martin & White, 2005). Table 3 showed the comparison of affect resources used by *The Economist* and *Allafrica*. Obviously, *The Economist* used affect resources more frequently than *Allafrica*. Overall, most affect resources of *Allafrica* were positive, indicating satisfaction and inclination towards the initiative such as expressions of positivity, desires for further cooperation, and gratitude for cooperation. On the contrary, in *The Economist*, most affecr resources were negative, mainly focusing on dissatisfaction and insecurity towards BRI such as expressions of hostility, concerns about debt issues, and dissatisfaction of foreign countries. This contrast highlighted the different views of the two media on BRI. *Allafrica* emphasized cooperation and positivity, while *The Economist* emphasized doubt and criticism.

**Table 3. Distribution of Affect Resources in the News Discourses**

| Data Resources | Un/happiness | Dis/satisfaction | In/security | Dis/inclination | Total Number of Affect Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *The Economist* | 8 (5.06%) | 15 (9.49%) | 14 (8.86%) | 14 (8.86%) | 51 (32.28%) |
| *Allafrica* | 4 (1.90%) | 9 (4.27%) | 2 (0.95%) | 14 (6.64%) | 29 (13.74%) |

In general, in *Allafrica*'s news reports related to BRI, affect resources were mainly positive,. In Example (1), the "positive" word expressed an affirmative attitude, indicating its satisfaction and appreciation for the infrastructure development projects of the BRI, reflecting expectations for Sino-Africa cooperation. This belonged to the positive satisfaction resource in affect resources. In Example (2), "grateful" belonged to the happiness resource, expressing joy and gratitude for cooperation between the two countries in the field of vocational education and training, conveying subjective feelings and values, namely, a positive attitude towards this cooperative relationship.

*Example (1)* BRI is delivering infrastructure development across Africa, and the continent has a more **positive (+satisfaction)** view of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) than anywhere else outside China. (*Allafrica*, 2023-10-25)

*Example (2)* We are really **grateful (+happiness)** for the cooperation between the two countries in the TVET sector, and we are now upgrading our cooperation to a very high level so as to deepen the previous cooperation to a more increased bilateral connection between the two countries. (*Allafrica*, 2023-11-02)

On the contrary, in *The Economist*'s news reports on the initiative, affect resources were mainly negative, focusing on dissatisfaction, insecurity, and non-inclination. However, there were also positive evaluations of Chinese policies in the reports. In Example (3), the word "worries" belonged to the type of dissatisfaction resource, related to the view of the BRI project, expressing complaints about participating countries' excessive reliance on Chinese labor and supplies in infrastructure projects by Chinese companies. In Example (4), "desire" expressed a positive emotional state and reflects a positive vision for the project, belonging to a positive inclination resource.

*Example (3)* The workshops also help assuage **worries (+dissatisfaction)** about the Belt and Road. Participating governments sometimes complain that the companies which win its infrastructure projects rely too much on labour and supplies from China. (*The Economist*, 2023-10-18)

*Example (4)* Much the same **desire (+inclination)** suffused the Third Belt and Road Forum, held in Beijing on October 17th and 18th. The forum commemorated the first ten years of the Belt and Road Initiative (bri), a lending and infrastructure scheme that has seen China build dams, bridges, ports and more on four continents. (*The Economist*, 2023-10-18)

4.2.2 Comparative Analysis of Judgement Resource Distribution

Judgment resources refer to the attitude judgment of behavior, involving appreciation or criticism, praise or condemnation (Martin & White, 2005). The judgment system can be divided into two major categories: social sanction and social esteem. Social sanction involves attitudinal values without legal significance, while social esteem includes a set of rules or regulations with legal or moral significance (Mirzaagabeyk, 2022). Table 4 illustrated the differences in the distribution of judgment resources in the reports of BRI by the two media institutions. In general, the use of judgment resources in *Allafrica* was higher than that in *The Economist*. It primarily focused on the use of tenacity, veracity and normativity, reflecting affirmation of the initiative and being reflected through commitments, actual achievements, sincerity, and strong cooperation between China and partner countries. In *The Economist*, judgment resources mainly involved negative judgment resources, focusing on propriety legitimacy and reliability, conveying doubts, concerns, and criticism of Chinese policies and their economic effectiveness.

**Table 4. Distribution of Judgement Resources in the News Discourses**

| Data Resources | Normality | Capacity | Tenacity | Propriety | Veracity | Total Number of Judgement Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *The Economist* | 14 (8.86%) | 1 (0.63%) | 9 (5.70%) | 20 (12.66%) | 5 (3.16%) | 49 (31.01%) |
| *Allafrica* | 17 (8.06%) | 1 (0.47%) | 28 (13.27%) | 7 (3.32%) | 21 (9.95%) | 74 (35.07%) |

In *Allafrica*'s relevant news reports, 95.95% of judgment resources were positive, expressing affirmation of the BRI. In Example (5), "tangible" belonged to positive veracity resources, affirming the actual achievements and reflecting Africa's view that China's policies were effective, emphasizing the the practicality and reliability of these achievements. The "sincerity" in Example (6) belonged to propriety resources, emphasizing China's sincerity and integrity in handling relations with Africa. This positive evaluation of the legitimacy and moral norms of behavior indicated that China's behavior was upright and moral. "Steadily" as a normality resource, made a positive evaluation of the stable development of China-Nepal relations, indicating that the progress of China-Nepal relations was stable and continuous as expected,, demonstrating a positive evaluation of behavioral predictability.

*Example (5)* Among the more **tangible (+veracity)** achievements so far is fostering "road connectivity". China has helped to finance and construct highways, rail and energy projects in various countries. (*Allafrica*, 2023-10-26)

*Example (6)* Due to the principles guiding China's African policy, including **sincerity (+propriety)**, real results, amity, and good faith, and the high-quality Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China-Nigeria

relations are **steadily (+normality)** advancing, with deepening cooperation in trade, investment, and contracted projects. (*Allafrica*, 2023-11-07)

In *The Economist*'s news reports, 51.02% of judgment resources belonged to negative polarity, expressing dissatisfaction and concerns about this initiative. In Example (7), the term "unsavoury" as negative propriety resources, reflected the West's doubts about the legitimacy of BRI and implying that this initiative was regarded as China's attempt to dominate the world order. However, positive judgmental resources are also used in the reports. In Example (8), the word "pragmatic" meant that the BRI was practical and pragmatic, belonging to positive veracity resources, reflecting affirmation of the feasibility of this initiative.

*Example (7)* But many in the West think its real purpose is to construct a Chinese-led world order in which **unsavoury (-propriety)** regimes can thrive. (*The Economist*, 2023-10-17)

*Example (8)* In this telling, China's Silk Road spirit is not a charitable impulse, but something more dependable: namely, a **pragmatic (+veracity)** pursuit of prosperity via mutually profitable trade. (*The Economist*, 2023-10-17)

4.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Appreciation Resource Distribution

Appreciation resources involve distinguishing the value of things, primarily evaluating them through their quality, complexity, and social norms(Ding et al., 2014). In the news reports of *The Economist* and *Allafrica*, appreciation resources were most predominantly used within the attitude system. Specifically, *The Economist*'s news reports mainly focused on valuation and reaction resources, highlighting a negative view of BRI, expressing concerns about its deviation from democratic principles and possible adverse impacts on the global order. Conversely, *Allafrica* emphasizes valuation and composition resources, expressing the positive impact of this initiative in promoting cooperation and partnerships between participating countries and China.

**Table 5. Distribution of Appreciation Resources in the News Discourses**

| Data Resources | Reaction | Composition | Valuation | Total Number of Appreciation Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *The Economist* | 19 (12.03%) | 14 (8.86%) | 25 (15.82%) | 58 (36.71%) |
| *Allafrica* | 13 (6.16%) | 38 (18.01%) | 57 (27.01%) | 108 (51.18%) |

In *Allafrica*'s news reports, 99.07% of appreciation resources were positive, affirming the contribution of the Belt and Road Initiative. In Example (9), the word "successful" indicates the affirmation of African media for the achievements of Chinese policies, implying that other countries could learn from its successful practices. In Example (10), "win-win" and "mutual" were both positive composition resources, indicating that this initiative promoted closer cooperation among participating countries and

established mutually beneficial and friendly partnerships, emphasizing the reciprocity and intimacy of cooperation.

*Example (9)* On the occasion, pertinent institutions and professionals drawn from both parties have taken part and discussed issues that are vital to advancing TVET, explore opportunities, address challenges, and draw lessons from **successful (+valuation)** Chinese practices. (*Allafrica*, 2023-11-02)

*Example (10)* They were framed as pursuing **win-win (+composition)** cooperation, **mutual (+composition)** assistance and affinity, and remaining open and inclusive. (*Allafrica*, 2023-10-26)

In *The Economist*'s reports, 55.17% of appreciation resources were negative, expressing doubts about the significance of the initiative. In Example (11), "contributed to" belonged to negative reaction resources, describing the BRI as a policy that caused debt problems and expressing its adverse consequences. However, in Example (12), the word "binge" expressed gratitude and affirmation for this initiative, belonging to positive valuation resources.

*Example (11)* The strongest criticism of the BRI is that it has **contributed to (-reaction)** dangerous debt levels in poor countries, some of which are now teetering on the edge of default. (*The Economist*, 2023-11-12)

*Example (12)* In 2023 the country celebrated the tenth anniversary of this infrastructure **binge (+valuation)**, which came to be known as the Belt and Road Initiative (bri). (*The Economist*, 2023-11-12)

## 5. Discussion

Through the analysis of the attitude resources in the news reports related to the Belt and Road Initiative of two media outlets, significant differences in the use of attitudinal resources by the two media could be seen. *The Economist* tended to use more negative attitude resources, mainly manifested in concerns about the possible negative impacts of BRI, such as debt risks and excessive reliance on Chinese resources. The use of such negative attitude resources reflected the questioning attitude of Western media towards Chinese policies and embodied the inherent biases in the Western perspective. In contrast, *Allafrica* exhibited the opposite trend, frequently using positive attitudinal resources, giving favorable evaluations to the BRI's contributions in promoting Africa's economic growth and infrastructure development, supported by specific examples of Africa's development progress.

The differences in the specific distribution of attitude resources between the two news media not only reflected the differences in reporting styles and stances of the two media, but also underscored the influence of national political stances and cultural backgrounds. It is worth noting that although there are significant differences in the use of attitude resources by the two media, they both frequently utilize judgment and appreciation resources in their reports, in order to convey specific attitudes towards BRI while maintaining news objectivity. *The Economist* combines the use of positive and negative attitude resources in its reports, but mainly emphasizes the possible negative consequences of the initiative through negative judgment and appreciation resources. Meanwhile, *Allafrica* shows support and

expectation for the Belt and Road Initiative through positive judgment and appreciation resources. This difference in reporting styles further illustrates the stances and attitudes of media in different countries in reporting international affairs.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper takes the attitude system in the appraisal theory as the theoretical framework and conducts an analysis and comparative study on the news reports of Western media and African media on China's Belt and Road Initiative from three aspects: affect, judgment, and appreciation resources. The study finds that *The Economist* tends to use negative attitude resources to express concerns and doubts about BRI, while also employing a certain amount of positive resources. On the other hand, *Allafrica* uses more positive attitude resources and affirms the positive role of the Belt and Road Initiative in promoting Africa's economy and infrastructure development.

Overall, despite the significant differences in the use of attitude resources in the reports of *The Economist* and *Allafrica*, both media have shown specific attitudes towards BRI from their respective perspectives. *The Economist* mainly focuses on the potential risks and challenges of the initiative, and at the same time also affirms the positive impacts of the BRI policy on participating countries. Historically, Western media reports on Chinese policies have often had a negative tone. However, the distribution of attitude resourcesin this study suggests that Western media, including *The Economist*, are beginning to recognize the positive aspects of BRI. This shift indicates a gradual change in the attitude of Western media towards China as the country rises increasingly in the process of globalization. In contrast, *Allafrica*, reflecting the perspective of African countries, praises the positive role of the initiative in improving people's livelihood in Africa and expects to continue to cooperate with China to promote the development of the global economy. Based on the reports of *Allafrica*, it can be seen that the partnership between China and Africa is solid, laying a solid foundation for closer future cooperation.

This analysis reflects the stances and perspectives of different media in reporting on international economic cooperation, and at the same time reveals the profound influence of national political background and culture on news reports. Future research can further deeply analyze the contents of reports of other foreign media by expanding the sample size to achieve a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the international communication of BRI, so as to provide greater insight into the global dissemination and impact of the initiative.

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