RECONTEXTUALIZING "CHINA" IN HU JINTAO AND MA YING-JEOU'S NEW YEAR'S SPEECHES

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1. Introduction

Language is fundamentally dialogical in nature (c.f. Bakhtin 1981). Discourse is a reproduction of existing social relations and structure, and aspects of texts, e.g. grammar and vocabulary, and is of ideological significance. Political discourse is one of the important aspects of studying language use in the public domain. The central theme is mainly about power, manipulation, and dominance (van Dijk 2008).

Politicians belong to such group of people who are almost always placed in the center of the spotlight and use language to maintain or recreate social and political ideologies. Politicians' speeches stand out from other types political discourses (c.f. news reporting) due to the speakers' (politicians) elite social status as well as their power of control especially primary access to the media. What they say in public is often found to be taken as the self-evident truths by the naïve general public. This is linked to Gramsci (1971)'s idea of "hegemony" in a society. Critical Discourse Analysis has made significant contribution to illuminating the relationship between language and ideology in media discourse (Fairclough 1989, Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

This paper analyzes New Year's addresses delivered by Mr Hu Jintao, President of People Republic of China and Mr Ma Ying-jeou, President of Taiwan over a three-year span. The cross-trait relationship between mainland China and Taiwan is among the most sensitive topics in today world. Due to the scarcity of Chinese political discourse analyses (e.g. Kuo 2002; Flowerdew 2004), little is known about how this delicate relationship is constructed and negotiated in political discourse Our analysis draws upon Critical Discourse Studies (CDA) and focuses on the use of the term "China" (including its many variants) as well as the first person pronouns (i.e. "we", "us", "our") in constructing their communal/national identities and ideologies in relation to the audience.

2. Context of the present paper

2.1 Sociopolitical background

2.1.1 Historical landmarks

Contemporary Taiwan has been continuously debating its national as well as international identity (Sobel et al 2010). To understand current relationship between mainland China and Taiwan, it is necessary to review several important historical landmarks in post-1949 era. With the Chinese Civil War turning decisively in the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) favor, the Republic of China (ROC) government led by the Kuomintang (KMT) retreated to Taiwan, while the CCP proclaimed the People's Republic of China (PRC) government in Beijing in 1949. "Cross-Strait Relations" was later adopted as a neutral term. Since 1949, for a very long time, the relations between mainland China and Taiwan have been characterized by limited contact, tensions, and instability. In the early years, military conflicts continued, while diplomatically both governments competed to be the legitimate government of China.

More recently, the legal and political status of Taiwan have become more controversial, the relations between the two sides worsened considerably when Chen Shui-Bian became the president of Taiwan implementing his pro-independence policy in an attempt to separate Taiwan from China permanently. In order to restrain Chen's intentions, the National People's Congress of People's republic of China passed the Anti-Secession Law on 14th March 2005, which authorized Beijing to resort to military force if Taiwan declares its independence. To date, the political status of Taiwan has remained a controversial issue contended by both sides, while mainland insists that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China that will be reunited sooner or later, the ruling regime in Taiwan regards Taiwan as an independent country.

At the same time, there have been increasing non-governmental and semi-governmental exchanges between the two sides. One of the most important achievements of these continuous communications was the 1992 Consensus. This consensus was an outcome of a meeting taken place in November 1992 between representatives from Taiwan-based Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) and China based Association for the Relationship Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). The agreements reached include (1) both mainland China and Taiwan belong to one China, and (2) both sides agree to verbally express the meaning of that one China according to their own individual definition. The 1992 Consensus has been considered to be the guideline policy for the governments from both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The 1992 Consensus is in one way functioning to mitigate the conflicts; however, it itself also allows creation of ambiguities on the term "China".

More recently, governments also began to restore the "three links" (transportation, commerce, and communications) between the two sides. Party-to-party talks between the CCP and the KMT have resumed and semi-official negotiations through organizations representing the interests of their respective governments are being scheduled. Since Ma Ying-jeou was elected to Presidency beginning in 2008, he has been promoting *the Three* "Nos" Policies (i.e. no unifications", "no independence", and "no use of military force"). These policies are in the favor of maintaining the *status quo* when handling the Taiwan's relation with mainland China.

2.1.2 The New Year Address and its audience

It has become a tradition for political leaders to give televised New Year's speeches in both mainland China and Taiwan. What is usually included in a New Year address often fits into the following two themes: retrospective and prospective. On one hand, achievements in the past year are often addressed to conclude the previous year; on the other hand, political leaders also describe prospects to welcome the following year. However, mainland and Taiwan differ in the date when the New Year speech is given. In mainland China, it is scheduled on December 31st; however it is on January 1st in Taiwan. Coincidentally or not, January 1st is also the date when the ROC was officially established (in 1912). Therefore, to give a speech on January 1st is twice as meaningful for Taiwan. Therefore, to some extent, New Year's speeches given by political leaders in Taiwan are targeting the domestic audience (people in Taiwan); while the speeches given by mainland China leaders are usually found to target domestic (people in mainland China) and international audience, despite the fact that all New Year's speeches are delivered in Mandarin Chinese. It is important to keep in mind the difference in audience-design when analyzing our data.

2.2 Deixis and polyphonic ambiguity

There has been plenty of work that shows deictical items used by politicians are almost always polyphony; their real reference meanings must be contextualized according to the political situation/climate at the time and/or the surrounding text. Politicians tend to 'manipulate pronouns to develop and indicate their ideological positions on specific issues'. The references of these indexials are dependent of their context of use. They are referred to as "shifters" by in Seidel (1975), which often the time yields political ambiguities, although in most cases are intended by the politicians. It is difficult to work out which of these groups are being referred to even given the context. The employments of these indexicals sometimes function as an involvement strategy of building rapport with the addressed audience. The polyphony of the deixis also contributes to speaker's identification of self and one or more visible "others". It helps to clarify complex multivoiced sequences with both explicit and implicit positions, selves and others, manifested explicitly in the presence of cited and named individuals. It is important to point out the participant role of the politician (c.f. Goffman 1981). First of all, it is conspicuous that politicians are the "animator" of their speeches. More prominently, politicians' speeches are characterized by its political agenda behind their "words" as they must have at least participated in selecting the ideas to encode; therefore, in a way they are also the "authors" of their speeches. Last but not the least, political leaders who represent different political parties must also show commitment to their own political beliefs.

De Fina's (1995) study on Mexican political discourse is a case in point. She found that the use of 'we' as self-reference shows that the speakers are not speaking as individuals but points to a principal, that is, the group or organization that they have come to represent; while the singular form "I" is used to show politicians' commitment to what they are saying, and therefore stressing the dimension of authorship. Although the use of the singular form of first person pronouns was not intended to be the focus of current study, it is worth mentioning that Ma's speeches show a alternation between the presidential/individual 'I' and the partisan when alternating between the description of his political agenda. In comparison, Hu seems to use the plural form almost exclusively, and the use singular form "I' is almost virtually unseen in his speech.

Flowerdew (2004) studies the discourse of the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, Tung Chee-hwa. He showed that the reference meaning of the first person pronoun alternates between "the people of Hong Kong", "the people of mainland China", or sometimes both of them. Flowerdew pointed out that it is Tung's intention to integrate the people of Hong Kong into a larger Chinese society in a post-colonial era. The inclusive use of the first person pronoun serve the purpose and in a way "project values onto the Hong Kong people" that "they may or may not share" (1565). It is also found that "Chinese Culture" seems to form a colocation that works as glue to bind the Hong Kong people with Chinese people in mainland China. In our data, we will show that in order to Ma highlight the shared "Chinese value" and "Chinese culture" in his speeches to bridge the political ideological gap between mainland China and Taiwan as well as to mitigate the potential conflict.

3. Methodology

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted reproduced and resisted by text and talks in the social the political context (Fairclough 1989; Fairclough and Wodak 1997). CDA is a collection of approaches that seek to show how ideological formations, or cultural discourses, are reflected or (re)created by language in context. CDA analysis usually has an explicit political agenda from the beginning, often focusing on some kind of inequality in society.

Our goal for this paper is first find out the reference meanings for "zhongguo" and "women" in Hu and Ma's speeches respectively. Secondly, we are also interested in reveal the underlying ideology behind the linguistic encoding. Given the critical goal of this paper, CDA was employed as the analytic tool and was conducted on six televised New Year's Addresses given by Mr. Hu and Mr. Ma (three each) during the past three years (2008-2011). The analysis will tackle the use of "zhongguo" (i.e. "China") and "women(de)" In order to answer these questions, we have analyzed all occurrences of the plural form of first person pronoun "we" and the use of "China" as well as the context they are found (Table 1). As the following Table 1 suggests, for the "China" variable, we have included China¹⁷, PRC, ROC, as well mainland China. Also, we have included both of the nominative/ accusative form (women) of "we" for the "we" variable.

Variable Variation Gloss China zhongguo "China" zhonghua ren min gonghe guo "People's Republic of China" zhonghua minguo "Republic of China" (zhongguo) dalu "mainland (China)" "we/us" We Women Women de "our/ours"

Table 2 Coding schema for "we" and "China"

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¹⁷ The term "China" in Mandarin language functions as an abbreviated term; it may use to refer to PRC, ROC, or the pre-modern China before the early 20th century depending on the context.

4. Analysis

4.1 (Re)defining China in discourse

Both Hu and Ma used "zhongguo" or its variations frequently in their speeches. Based upon our corpus, Hu used a total of 43 times of "zhongguo" while Ma used 41 times (Table 1).

China	Speaker				
	Hu		Ma		
	n	%	n	%	
Referential:					
People's Republic	42	97.67	0	0	
Republic of China	0	0	35	85.37	
mainland China	0	0	3	7.32	
Historical China	1	2.32	3	7.32	
Total	43	100	41	100	

Table 3 The referent of "zhongguo" (China) in Hu and Ma's speeches

As shown in Table 1, Hu used "zhongguo" almost exclusively to refer to the People's Republic of China (PRC) (97.67% of all instances). Ma used the term to mean Republic of China (ROC) most frequently (85.37%). Yet in addition to ROC, Ma also used it to refer to a variety of different entities, including the Chinese society in the past and Mainland China. For instance, in his speech given on January 1st of 2011, he compared China's dynastic past and the founding of the ROC, and rhetorically constructed a dichotomy between the two:

(1) 一百年前,<u>中國</u>飽受列強欺凌,幾乎亡國,國父領導革命,推翻滿清 ,建立亞洲第一個民主共和國一<u>中華民國</u>,向人民許下富強的承諾。 一百年前,<u>中國</u>歷史只有朝代的更替,人民不能當家做主。<u>中華民國</u> 的建立,向人民許下民主的承諾。¹⁸

A century ago, as <u>China</u> was besieged by foreign powers and on the verge of collapse, Dr. Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing court and founded <u>the Republic of China</u>—the first republic in all of Asia. A century ago, <u>Chinese history consisted only of the succession of dynasties</u>, and the people had no say in the matter. The establishment of <u>the Republic of China</u> was a pledge to the people to bring about a democratic way of life. (Ma, 2011)

In (1), China appeared four times, two of which occur in the form "zhongguo" and refer to the China in the past, and the other two occur as "zhonghua minguo" and explicitly refer to the ROC.

Ma then continued to describe the ROC's history and made a statement about how Taiwan became part of the Republic, as shown in (2) below:

1

The original text was given as the English translations sometimes are not faithful to their Mandarin equivalence. Due to the different convention in orthography, excerpts from Ma and Hu's speeches put in traditional and simplified Chinese characters respectively;

(2) 八年抗戰,<u>我們</u>粉碎日本侵略的野心,廢除了百年屈辱的不平等條約 ,臺灣因而重回中華民國版圖。

[T]he ROC [original text uses "women", we] crushed Japan's ambitions over China [original text does not include the part of "over China"] in an eight-year war of resistance, and abrogated unequal treaties that had been in place for almost a century. As a result, Taiwan was returned to the fold of the Republic of China (Ma, 2011)

The form of "zhongguo" only occurs in Ma's speech when he was referring to the past. When he spoke about today's China, he consistently used two terms related to "zhongguo" – "zhonghua minguo" for Taiwan, and "zhongguo dalu" (*Mainland China*) for the other side of the Strait. For instance, in (3), "zhonghua minguo" is used almost interchangeably with Taiwan and in contrast with "dalu" (*Mainland*), though the paragraph starts with "zhonghua minguo" (the *ROC*):

(3) 未來一百年, <u>中華民國</u>要做中華文化的領航者。臺灣沒有大陸的文革 動亂,六十多年來,臺灣保存了中華文化的深厚底蘊,從生活美感到 藝術美學,它的傳統韻味,讓世界驚艷。

In the next century, the ROC will be the standard-bearer at the leading edge of Chinese culture. Taiwan has never experienced anything like mainland China's [original text used "dalu", mainland] Cultural Revolution. Having preserved the rich roots of Chinese culture intact over the past six decades or so, Taiwan now dazzles the world with an aesthetic sense and artistic verve that are firmly grounded in a deep vein of traditional culture. (Ma, 2011)

In (3) above, Ma not only constructed a dichotomy between Taiwan and Mainland, but further praised the former as the real continuity of the Chinese culture (having preserved the rich roots of Chinese culture). In (4) below, Ma further identified the other side of the Strait as "zhongguo dalu" (mainland China) and distinguished it from Taiwan, though both sides are "descendents of Emperors Yen and Huang" 20:

(4) 我們希望有一天,所有炎黃子孫都能和臺灣人民一樣,享有自由、民主與法治的多元生活方式。我們深信,這樣的夢想並不遙遠,因為這些價值在臺灣都已經實現,不是西方人的專利,臺灣經驗應可作為中國大陸未來發展的借鏡。

We hope one day that all descendents of Emperors Yen and Huang will enjoy freedom, democracy, and rule of law, as we do here in Taiwan. This is not a far-off dream, because these values have all been realized in Taiwan. They are not exclusive to the West. Taiwan's experience can serve as a reference for the future development of mainland China. (Ma, 2011)

Thus, Taiwan is not only discursively represented as the continuity of the Republic of China and the Chinese culture, but also as the entity that enjoys freedom, democracy and

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¹⁹ Taiwan was previously a colony of Japan *as per* Treaty of Shimonoseki that ended the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895. It was returned to the government of China then, the Republic of China, in 1945 at the end of WWII.

²⁰ The term "all descendents of Emperors Yen and Huang" is derived from myths and has been commonly used to refer to the Chinese people, including different minorities within China and overseas Chinese, since late 19th century (Liu, 1999).

rule of law, and thus should become a reference for the future development of mainland China. In comparison, in Hu's speech, "zhongguo" frequently occurs as synonymous to "zhonghua renmin gonghe guo" (the People's Republic of China) and in contrast with the rest of the world. For instance, in (5), Hu described China in the past sixty years since the founding of the People's Republic:

(5) 60年前,<u>中华人民共和国</u>的成立揭开了中华民族发展历史新纪元。60 年来,<u>中国</u>的面貌发生了历史性变化,<u>中国</u>同世界的关系也发生了历史性变化。

The founding of the People's Republic of China six decades ago represent a new historic period in the development of the Chinese nation. During the past 60 years, China has experienced historic changes. The relationship between China and the rest of the world also experienced historic changes. (Hu, 2009)

There is one instance in the corpus where Hu used "zhongguo" to refer to China's history once, as shown in (7):

(6) <u>中国</u>各族人民隆重庆祝<u>新中国</u>成立60周年,为伟大祖国的发展进步感到无比自豪,决心在新的起点上把<u>中国</u>特色社会主义事业继续推向前进。

<u>Chinese</u> people of all ethnic groups have celebrated the 60th anniversary of the founding of <u>New China</u>, feeling extremely proud of our country's development, and determined to promote the socialist course with <u>Chinese</u> characteristics at a new starting point. (Hu, 2010)

In (7) above, Hu used "xin zhongguo" (*New China*) to refer to the People's Republic of China in a historical sense by contrasting it with old China. However, "old China" never occurs in his speech.

4.2 Identifying "us" and "them"

"Women" occurred 99 times in Ma's speech corpus. In comparison, it occurred fourteen times in Hu's speech. Both speakers use the pronoun to mean different entities, sometimes referring to the collective of people while some other times referring to only the government (Table 2).

We	Speaker				
	Hu		Ma		
	n	%	n	%	
Referential:					
The nation/people	6	42.86	62	62.63	
The government	8	57.14	37	37.37	
Total	14	100	99	100	

Table 4 The referent of "women" (we) in Hu and Ma's speeches

(7) 这是为何政府推动与大陆协商「经济合作架构协议」(ECFA)的原因。 我们希望在这项架构协议中,纳入降低关税的「早期收穫」条款,以 维繫台湾产品外销的竞争力,避免外销市场的边缘化,并引进新的外 来投资,进而激励台湾经济成长,创造更多就业。

This is why the government is pushing to sign an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with mainland China. We hope to see an "early harvest" list of items eligible for lower tariffs included in the ECFA to help us maintain our export competitiveness, avoid being marginalized in our export markets, attract new foreign investment, stimulate Taiwan's economic growth and boost employment. (Ma, 2010)

In Ma's speech, "women" occurs a few times together with "er qian san bai wan ren" (23 million people). The co-occurrence (我们二千三百万人, us 23 million people) makes the deictic form of "us" explicitly refer to people in Taiwan and exclude everyone else. For instance, the co-occurrence happens in the following two statements:

(8) <u>我們</u>應當充滿自信,臺灣的未來,當然是掌握在<u>我們二千三百萬人</u>手中。

We should have full confidence that Taiwan's future is, as a matter of course, in the hands of its 23 million people. (Ma, 2010)

(9) <u>我們</u>要相互扶持,彼此勉勵,國家的前途、臺灣的未來,都掌握在<u>我們二千三百萬人手中</u>,由<u>我們</u>自己來決定。<u>我們</u>要以實力捍衛中華民國主權,以行動維護臺灣尊嚴,以智慧打造臺灣未來,讓<u>我們</u>共同開創下一個百年盛世!

<u>We</u> must support and encourage each other, because the nation's prospects and Taiwan's future are in the hands of <u>our 23 million people</u>. <u>We</u> decide matters for <u>ourselves</u>. <u>We</u> must steadfastly defend the ROC's sovereignty and work to protect Taiwan's dignity. With wisdom, let <u>us</u> create a brighter future for Taiwan and another prosperous century. (Ma, 2011)

Hu used "women" when he spoke about policies in mainland China, such as in (1):

(10) 在新的一年里,<u>我们</u>将坚定不移高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜,以邓小平理论和"三个代表"重要思想为指导,深入贯彻落实科学发展观,保持宏观经济政策的连续性和稳定性,继续实施积极的财政政策和适度宽松的货币政策,根据新形势新情况着力提高政策的针对性和灵活性,更加注重提高经济增长质量和效益,更加注重推动经济发展方式转变和经济结构调整,更加注重推进改革开放和自主创新、增强经济增长活力和动力,更加注重改善民生、保持社会和谐稳定,更加注重统筹国内国际两个大局,努力实现经济平稳较快发展,继续推进全面建设小康社会进程。

In the upcoming new year, <u>we</u> will unswervingly uphold the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, deepen the implementation of the Scientific Outlook on Development under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents, maintain a balanced and relatively fast economic growth based on the expansion of domestic consumption, accelerate the change of development mode and structural adjustment, increase the ability of sustainable development, deepen the reform and opening up to inject vigor and vitality into social and economic

development, enhance social program construction, accelerate the speed of resolving hard issues confronting citizens, maintain sound and fast social and economic development. (Hu, 2009)

- In (10), Hu discussed China's policies in the upcoming year. Through using the collective pronoun "women", the social actor that makes and implements these policies is made unclear (either referring to the government or the general public, or both). Yet given the context, it is clear that these policies are only effective within the PRC, and thus despite who "women" actually refers to, it is pointing at mainland China only. In addition to using "women" to refer to the government, Hu also used "women" to refer both the government and the general public, as in (11)
 - (11) 在这里,我谨代表中国政府和中国人民,对世界各国人民今年以来给 予<u>我们</u>大力支持和热情帮助,表示衷心的感谢! On behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, I would like to express <u>our</u> heartfelt gratitude to people from all around the world for their support and assistance. (Hu, 2009)
- In (11), Hu explicitly stated that he was speaking on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, and then moved to thank people from all around the world for their support. In this instance, Hu constructed rhetorically solidarity and full cooperation between the Chinese government and the general public by including both in "women". Interestingly enough, in (12), there is one instance where "women" refers to the entire human race:
 - (12) 此时此刻,在我们共同生活的这个星球上,还有不少民众正蒙受着战争、贫穷、疾病、自然灾害等苦难的煎熬。中国人民深切同情他们的不幸境遇,将一如既往向他们提供力所能及的帮助。 At this moment on this planet we inhabit, there are still people who are suffering the effects of war, poverty, sickness and natural disasters. The Chinese people have great sympathy for their pain, and are always willing to do all we [original text does not contain "we" here] can to help them
- In (12), Hu began the sentence by saying *on this planet we inhabit* and positioned the speaker as a member of the world. He then spoke about the people *who are suffering the effects of war, poverty, sickness and natural disasters* as "tamen" (*them*), and stated that the Chinese people will *do all we can to help them*. Through using "women" to refer to the entire human race, Hu situates the China as a member of the international community. Yet by indicating the people in other countries as *them* who will receive help from the Chinese people, Hu again is rhetorically representing the Chinese people.

overcome the difficulties." (Hu, 2009)

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on our analysis, we see that both Hu and Ma used "zhongguo" or its variations frequently in their New Year speeches. Ma consistently used "zhonghua minguo" (the ROC) in contrast with "zhongguo dalu" (mainland China), and the former as the legitimate heir of the historic China. Hu used both "zhongguo" (China) and "zhonghua renmin gongheguo" (the PRC) in his speeches, and China is situated in relation to the world. Therefore, in Ma's speeches, China loses its geographical sense but instead it is a

historical concept. In Hu's speeches, China is instead located in the world and it is synonymous with the PRC.

Both Hu and Ma used "women" to refer to the people and the government. Ma's use of "women" is often closely associated with a strong geographical sense (e.g. Taiwan, the 23 million people) and excludes people outside Taiwan. Hu's use of "women" is consistent with his use of China, as it also situates China and the Chinese people within the international community. In addition, Hu also commonly uses "women" to represent both the people and the government of PRC, and rhetorically construct the absolute solidarity and full cooperation between the two.

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