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CONSTRUCTING POWER AND RESISTANCE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF VICTOR GAO'S RHETORIC IN THE U.S.–CHINA TARIFF WAR

Alisa
Universitas Bangka Belitung
Email: alisavkim@gmail.com

Dr. Diana Anggraeni, M.Hum.
Universitas Bangka Belitung
Email: dianaanggraeni@gmail.com

Sandy Ferianda, M.Hum
Universitas Bangka Belitung
Email: ferianda02021992@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kekuasaan dan perlawanan dikonstruksi melalui wacana publik Victor Gao dalam konteks perang tarif antara Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok. Victor Gao, seorang akademisi dan komentator politik yang sering tampil di media internasional, memainkan peran penting dalam menyuarakan perspektif Tiongkok di panggung global. Menggunakan pendekatan Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model Teun A. Van Dijk, penelitian ini menelaah wacana Gao dari segi struktur teks, kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis terhadap transkrip debat Victor Gao yang disiarkan di media internasional. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat total 36 data utama yang terklasifikasi ke dalam masing-masing dimensi CDA. Pada struktur teks, ditemukan 2 data pada level makrostruktur, 12 data pada superstruktur, dan 22 data mikrostruktur. Pada dimensi kognisi sosial dan konteks sosial yang menunjukkan akses wacana dan kekuasaan. Secara keseluruhan, Victor Gao secara konsisten membingkai Tiongkok sebagai aktor yang rasional dan pendukung perdagangan bebas, sementara Amerika Serikat digambarkan sebagai kekuatan dominasi yang merusak tatanan global. Strategi kebahasaan seperti repetisi, metafora, dan diksi ideologis digunakan untuk membangun citra Tiongkok sebagai pihak yang tertekan namun berdaya. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa melalui wacana, aktor non-negara seperti Gao dapat mereproduksi ideologi nasional dan membentuk resistansi terhadap dominasi Barat dalam ranah wacana internasional.

Kata Kunci: CDA, Kekuasaan,Perlawanan, Perang Tarif.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze how power and resistance are constructed through Victor Gao's public discourse in the context of the tariff war between the United States and China. Victor Gao, an

academic and political commentator who frequently appears in international media, plays a significant role in voicing China's perspective on the global stage. Using Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, this study examines Gao's discourse in terms of text structure, social cognition, and social context. The method used is a descriptive qualitative method with an analysis of Victor Gao's debate transcripts broadcast in international media. The analysis results show a total of 36 primary data items classified into each CDA dimension. In the text structure, 2 data items were found at the macrostructure level, 12 data items at the superstructure level, and 22 data of microstructure level. In the social cognition and social context dimensions there was indicating access to discourse and power. Overall, Victor Gao consistently frames China as a rational actor and a supporter of free trade, while the United States is portrayed as a dominant force that undermines the global order. Linguistic strategies such as repetition, metaphor, and ideological diction are used to construct an image of China as oppressed yet empowered. This study concludes that through discourse, non-state actors like Gao can reproduce national ideology and form resistance to Western domination in the realm of international discourse.

Keywords: *CDA, Power, Resistance, Tariff War.*

INTRODUCTION

The trade war that broke out in the late 2010s between China and the United States is one of the most significant geopolitical and economic conflicts that has changed the world's perspective on trade, diplomacy and global power competition. According to Bown, C. P., & Kolb, M. (2021) state the trade war between the U.S. and China is unprecedented in scope and has brought significant uncertainty to global trade dynamics. This conflict escalated significantly from 2018 to 2020. It was initiated by President Donald Trump's administration in response to long-standing Chinese trade concerns. In addition to allegations of intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, state subsidies to Chinese companies, and trade imbalances that favor China.

The US government no longer sees China simply as a trading partner, but rather as a strategic competitor perceived as threatening American economic dominance. In response, the US implemented a series of protectionist policies, most notably through the imposition of tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of imported Chinese products. China retaliated with similar tariffs on US products, particularly in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. What started out as a simple trade dispute has slowly turned into what is now known as a “trade war”. This conflict is no longer just an economic issue, but has transformed into a struggle for influence and power between two major countries, exposing sharp ideological and geopolitical differences. The repercussions are far reaching not only for the two countries, but also for the world. Global financial markets have become volatile, and many large corporations have been forced to revisit how they manage their supply chains and design investments, in order to survive the ongoing uncertainty.

This conflict does not only take place in the form of tariff policies and trade negotiations, but also through the construction of discourses that are widespread in the mainstream media, both national and international. In this situation, the media plays an important role in framing the tariff war (Zhang & Pan, 2020), shaping global public opinion, and directing the narrative around who dominates or is violated in the world trade order. Along with intensified media coverage has come the phenomenon of expert commentary streamed live on global news platforms. These commentaries have not only become spaces for academic discussion, but also arenas of ideological contestation. Analysts, political commentators, and former diplomats including Victor Gao, are often present to deliver narratives that represent specific geopolitical positions. In this context, public rhetoric becomes more than just opinion; it turns into a strategic tool in influencing global

perceptions. Amid this media-driven ideological battleground, certain individuals have emerged as influential discursive agents who actively participate in constructing national narratives and shaping international opinion. One of the most prominent among them is Victor Gao.

Victor Gao is a Center for China and Globalization Vice President , former personal translator of Deng Xiaoping, and a widely recognized figure in international discourse on Chinese foreign policy and as an English-speaking commentator who has consistently defended China's foreign and economic policies in various international media. In his statements, Gao has repeatedly raised themes of national sovereignty, economic nationalism, and criticism of Western hypocrisy. In various debates, including his latest debate with media on the Al Arabiya English youtube channel broadcast on april 16, 2025 regarding President Trump's tariff policy, Victor Gao presented arguments that explicitly portrayed China's position as a defender of free trade and implicitly presented the United States as a threat to global order.

To understand how power and resistance are formed through this kind of discourse, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach is very relevant. Van Dijk, T. A. (1993, p. 249–283) states CDA 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 talk in the social and political context. CDA, especially the model developed by Teun A. Van Dijk, emphasizes the importance of the relationship between language, social cognition, and power structures in society (Van Dijk, 2018). Through in-depth analysis of text, social context, and ideological structures, CDA allows researchers to uncover hidden meanings in public speech and the linguistic strategies used to legitimize or challenge power. Therefore, this study focuses on how Victor Gao, as a discursive figure who is not a state official, is able to construct an image of China as a great power and defend its interests amid international pressure. Through the CDA approach, particularly Van Dijk's model, this research aims to uncover the discourse strategies he uses to shape global perceptions and counter hegemonic narratives from the West. In the context of English Literature studies, this research also contributes to the development of political and media text analysis as part of contemporary discourse studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs qualitative descriptive approach. Moleong (2007, p. 6) states that qualitative research aims to understand social and cultural phenomena of society in depth, not just external symptoms. Since this study focuses on discourse analysis, which is closely related to the process of interpreting an debate transcript text. Therefore, author realize that qualitative methods are the most appropriate approach to use. This is in line with Creswell's opinion (2014, p. 4) which states that a qualitative approach aims to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to a social or human problem, qualitative researchers usually collect data themselves through documentation and observation.

Yin (2011, p. 129-130), also emphasizes that various sources such as videos, documents, and transcripts are essential to construct a comprehensive qualitative analysis. One of the main characteristics of a qualitative approach is that it does not rely on questionnaires or laboratory experiments as in a quantitative approach. Instead, this method emphasizes data collection through behavioral observations, document reviews, and interviews, which are then interpreted personally and theoretically to reveal the meaning of the data (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12).

This study uses a qualitative approach with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework developed by Teun A. Van Dijk. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explore how language in the form of debate transcription (text) is used by strategic actors such as Victor Gao in forming representations of power and resistance in the geopolitical context of the trade war between the United States and China. And author believes that qualitative method is the most ideal approach to use in this study because not only does qualitative method suits the analytical process of data analysis, which is discourse analysis, but also this method suits the entire theme and purpose of this study because qualitative method because among the purpose, qualitative method has been traditionally used for research in the field of sociology and humanity. By using CDA, the researcher seeks to uncover how Victor Gao's narrative strategically frames China as a rational and constructive party, and positions the United States as an aggressor in the global economic conflict.

Object of the Study

The object of this study is the transcription of Victor Gao's rhetoric in English, delivered through international media on the Al Arabiya English youtube channel uploaded on April 16, 2025, entitled China Says It's Ready For War With America | Elliot Abrams and Victor Gao Debate on Counterpoints. Victor Gao was chosen because of his role as a commentator on Chinese foreign policy and a former translator for Deng Xiaoping, and because he often represents China's ideological perspective in international forums presenting his opinions on the issue of tariff wars and US policies towards China. Another reason in choosing this object is because there are several interesting language usages by Victor Gao that can be analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis method.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure in this research refers to the stages proposed by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2011), where the researcher plays an active role in gathering data from textual sources such as documents, video transcripts, and media content, that are written:

1. browsing for the script and video of the victor gao debate, which is available on the Al Arabiya English youtube channel which can be accessed link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NA9pTqZ3NYU entitled “China Says It's Ready For War With America | Elliot Abrams and Victor Gao Debate on Counterpoints”, which was uploaded on april 16, 2025 with a duration of 48:17 minutes.
2. Downloading the script and video as the second stage of data collection, after the data from the script and video are collected, this study requires the data to be downloaded and then saved. The video data is transcribed first to facilitate the textual discourse analysis process. In particular, the script as the main data to be analyzed. The script is obtained in the form of a pdf file.
3. Searching and collecting references, e.g. journals, articles, thesis, etc., that are useful to help author conducting a critical discourse analysis on the debate transcripts.
4. Reading the debate transcription thoroughly to find any words, expression, and other linguistic features that can be analysed according to Critical Discourse Analysis framework by Teun A. Van Dijk.

Data Analysis

The steps are as follows:

1. Analyzing the text (Textual Structure), At this stage the author analyzes lexical choices (diction), syntactic structures, language styles, referential strategies, and other rhetorical devices used by Victor Gao. The focus of this analysis is how language is used to emphasize China's position, build the country's image, and position the United States as a dominant actor.
2. Analyzing the cognition (Cognitive Structure), at this stage the author examines mental representations, situational models, and ideological schemas that reflect Victor Gao's perspective on international relations and trade conflicts. This analysis also illustrates how the discourse reflects the collective knowledge, values, and ideological beliefs associated with the Chinese state narrative.
3. Analyzing the social (Social Context), This dimension connects text and cognition to the broader social, political, and economic background. The researcher examines how Victor Gao's position in the power structure, media access, and geopolitical conditions shape discourse strategies. This analysis also includes the power relations between the state, media, and public actors in voicing national interests through diplomatic rhetoric.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Text Analysis

1. Thematic (Macro Structure)

Macro structure according to Van Dijk is a "global semantic structure" or core/main topic in a text that represents the central theme or main idea of the entire discourse. It works at the conceptual level and is the result of abstraction of local elements of discourse (Van Dijk, 1980). This thematic directs the reader or listener to the main ideological message of the text or rhetoric. The data analysis shows below:

Datum 1

“Thank you very much for having me. First of all, China's rise is inevitable. No one can stop it. The United States cannot stop it. That's the **mega trend**.”

This statement sentence is the foundation of Victor Gao's entire argument, which positions China's rise as a *mega trend* which is defined as a major and long-term change that affects various aspects of life, such as social, economic, political, and technological, on a global scale. This change is formed slowly, but its impact is significant and long-lasting, forming major trends in various fields. In the CDA framework, this indicates an ideological legitimation strategy, namely framing China's position as a power that is destined to be the center of the world. In line with Van Dijk (2006), such statements serve to build a positive collective mental model of the in-group actor (China), while simultaneously reinforcing the dominant position in the eyes of the listener or reader.

2. Schematic (Superstructure)

Victor Gao's discourse in the debate demonstrates a comprehensive superstructure that reflects a strategic and ideologically, driven rhetorical organization. In this study, the superstructure is analyzed holistically by examining the entire flow of Gao's statements throughout the debate. This overall segmentation reveals a deliberate and consistent structure consisting of three main parts: introduction, content, and conclusion, as conceptualized in Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. By following the introduction; establishing China's legitimacy → content; ideological framing of the enemy (the US) and affirming the truth of China's position → conclusion; global appeal and articulation of the morality of the struggle. Gao forms a political discourse that is not only informative but also highly ideological and persuasive. This structure is in line with Teun A. Van Dijk's CDA concept that "the structure of discourse not only describes messages, but also constructs an ideological map that shapes public opinion and power relations in society" (Van Dijk, 2006). This structure strengthens the macrostructure that has been discussed previously and reflects the function of discourse as a tool to influence global public opinion, represent the position of the state, and arouse ideological sympathy from third parties.

3. Semantic (Micro Structure)

In this study, semantic analysis focuses on Victor Gao's discourse, focusing on five important elements in the semantic microstructure framework according to

Teun A. Van Dijk's approach; background, detail, purpose, presupposition, and nominalization.

Background

The background element refers to the background information or knowledge that the speaker uses to strengthen his main proposition. In Victor Gao's discourse, the background is constructed to show China's historical and geopolitical position. The statement in Datum *1 "China's rise is inevitable. ...No one can stop it."* This sentence does not stand alone. It contains the historical background that China's rise has been going on for decades and that the country has undergone massive modernization and economic development.

Detail

The element of detail refers to how a speaker selects and presents specific information to reinforce an ideological position. In Victor Gao's discourse, details are used selectively to reinforce the narrative that China is the reactive and dignified party, while the US is the aggressor. in Datum 4 *"China has now imposed a retaliatory tariff of up to 125% against all US exports to China."* The mention of the number 125% is not just a statistic, but part of a semantic strategy to give emotional and political weight to China's actions. This number shows that China's response is concrete, measurable, and legitimate, rather than aimlessly reactive. Details like this in CDA indicate that what is mentioned and what is hidden is part of a discursive power play. Victor Gao, for example, does not mention the economic impact on China itself, but only highlights how the US will be affected.

Purpose

Every utterance in discourse carries a semantic purpose, whether to convince, persuade, or reject. In Victor Gao's discourse, the purpose is clear: to frame China as a moral, rational, and legitimate world power — while also showing the US as the party that is destroying the global order. The statement in Datum 4 *"...I will never succumb to the US pressure. This is the moment of truth."* shows that the purpose of his discourse is not only reactive, but also proactive, which creates a heroic narrative.

Presupposition

Presupposition is information that is assumed to be known or agreed upon by the audience, so it does not need to be proven again. In Victor Gao's discourse, many claims are built on the presumptions that: the US is a disruptor of world peace, free trade is a universal value that is upheld, the world is watching this confrontation as in the sentence in Datum 5 *"The rest of the world is watching."* This sentence does not explain who or what evidence shows that the world is watching. But it builds the perception that China's actions and choices are things that are highlighted by the international world, and therefore must be considered important. This presupposition also creates moral pressure for the audience: "if you are part of the world, then you need to pay attention and choose a position." In CDA, presupposition is often used to naturalize ideology, so that it appears as a fact, even though it is a social and political construction.

Nominalization

Nominalization is the process of changing a verb into a noun, which can lead to obscuring the perpetrator or emphasizing the event. In Victor Gao's discourse, this strategy is often used to: emphasize the consequences of the perpetrator, disguise the real perpetrator in an act of aggression. In Datum 19 shows the sentence does not mention who carried out the *destruction* directly, but is implicitly directed at the US through context. By obscuring the perpetrator, nominalization creates an objective and fatalistic atmosphere: that the destruction has already occurred and it is up to China to respond.

4. Syntax (Micro Structure)

Victor Gao uses effective, targeted, and persuasive sentence structures. Short, sharp sentences, logical cohesion, and strategic use of references reflect his skill in delivering a strong yet humane political discourse. The syntax in Gao's speech does not merely form grammar, but becomes a tool for constructing meaning, power, and legitimacy.

5. Stylistic (Micro Structure)

Stylistics in discourse studies is the study of word choice (diction), delivery style, and language variations used to form certain connotative meanings, emotions,

or images. Victor Gao's discourse is not just an ordinary political statement. It is a consciously constructed language designed to influence the way his audience thinks, feels, and takes sides. Through his choice of words, structure, and style of delivery, Gao consistently positions China as a wise, rational, and just moral actor, facing the United States as a destructive, one-sided, and aggressive party.

Gao begins his discourse with a firm statement in Datum 1 *"China's rise is inevitable. No one can stop it. The United States cannot stop it. That's the mega trend."* words such as *inevitable*, *no one*, and *mega trend* are lexical choices that not only emphasize historical certainty, but also provide a global, objective, and irrefutable nuance. This is a predictive style of language that positions the opponent (the US) not as a determinant, but as a small obstacle in the great flow of history. Then in Datum 2 *"This trade war... is the wrong war and it's not constructive."* The use of the phrase *wrong war* contains great rhetorical power. He not only assesses US policy as strategically wrong, but also morally wrong, as if it were unethical to do in modern world relations. In Datum 4 *"China will fight to the end... prepared to fight to the end..."""Trade war, tariff war, technology war, or real war."* Victor Gao's stylistics is also very prominent in the use of repetition, this repetition is not a form of linguistic weakness, but rather a rhetorical strengthening tool. By repeating the phrase *fight to the end*, Gao strengthens China's position as a nation that will not submit, even to the end. He creates heroic emotions and arouses the spirit of nationalism and sympathy from the global audience. Gao not only uses language to defend China, but also to invite the world that can be seen in Datum 4 *"Let's all be prepared."* and in Datum 5 *"The rest of the world is watching."* this statement inserts an inclusive and universal nuance. He conveys that what is happening between the US and China is not just a bilateral conflict, but a global crisis that will affect the fate of all countries. This is a style that builds solidarity, which arouses the concern and moral awareness of a wide audience from foreign governments, international observers, to civil society. And in Datum 7 that conveys the noble values of Chinese culture and nationalism. By placing "*dignity"* and "*decency"* above economic gain, Gao indirectly conveys to the world that China is not a materialistic country and China holds moral principles and national dignity higher than momentary interests. This is a very strong emotional and humanistic stylistic, because it raises national identity

not just as a political actor, but as a possessor of noble values that deserve to be respected.

6. Rhetoric (Micro Structure)

The final stage in microstructure text analysis is rhetorical analysis, there are two main elements that can be analyzed, namely metaphor and number. Metaphors are used not only to beautify language, but also to represent reality through certain glasses. Victor Gao uses metaphors strategically to shift economic issues (trade) into moral and existential conflicts. The use of numbers in rhetorical elements has an important role in shaping meaning and influencing readers or listeners. Numbers can be used to make statements more specific and measurable, thereby increasing the trust and credibility of arguments.

Metaphor

Metaphors in Gao's discourse fill the rhetorical space with symbolic narratives, in Datum 2 "*It throws all the rules of the game out of the window.*" this sentence depicts the US as a cheater in the "*game*" of world trade, a sports metaphor that is widely understood by the public. In Datum 3 "*Manhandling of mankind*." this sentence is a much deeper and more touching metaphor: the US action is depicted as not only hurting China, but also insulting the dignity of all mankind. Herein lies the power of Victor Gao's rhetoric: he expands the arena of discourse from the policy level to the human level.

Number

In Victor Gao's discourse, numbers are used to give the impression of being objective, factual, and convincing. However, in political discourse, numbers are not always neutral, they can be a very powerful persuasive tool. In Datum 4 "*China has now imposed a retaliatory tariff of up to 125% against all US exports to China.*" This 125% tariff is a very specific and high number. Mentioning it explicitly shows China's seriousness in responding to the US economic attack. On the one hand, this

number shows that China's response is firm, but still within the framework of a measured and legitimate response. Gao repeatedly mentions the population of China in Datum 31 "*China has a population of 1.4 billion people... You are talking about 1.4 billion people*." This is a quantitative rhetorical technique by presenting data in the form of numbers to strengthen the argument that in such a large population, the existence of a handful of citizens in conflict does not reflect the attitude of the state, it is illogical to judge the political position of a nation only from the behavior of individuals. This style creates a narrative that China is a large country with complex citizen dynamics, so it cannot be generalized.

B. Social Cognition

In the context of Victor Gao's discourse on the tariff war between China and the United States, the aspect of social cognition plays an important role in shaping how he interprets and conveys messages to the international public. Based on Van Dijk's approach, social cognition is the link between social structure and discourse production: it reflects how mental representations such as beliefs, values, and collective ideologies are processed internally by individuals and then manifested in the form of strategic language or speech.

Victor Gao, as an academic and informal spokesperson for Chinese foreign policy, speaks not only as an individual, but as a representation of the collective perspective held by China's political and intellectual elites. In various parts of his discourse, he consistently portrays China as a peaceful, rational, and constructive global power while the United States is portrayed as an actor that undermines the international trade order through unilateral and coercive actions. The statements in Datum 1 "*China's rise is inevitable*," and in Datum 5 "*China wants to defend free trade. The United States wants to destroy free trade.*" are not mere expressions, but rather forms of social construction built by China's national ideology.

Thus, through the lens of social cognition, we can understand that Victor Gao's rhetoric in the tariff war is not just communication between countries, but a reflection of shared beliefs and values that live in China's national ideology. This is a form of discourse resistance that is very much in line where power and resistance do not only take place in real actions, but also in the field of language and thought representation.

C. Social Context

In analyzing the social context dimension, which is the last dimension in Teun A. Van

Dijk's CDA, we understand that the social context is not only concerned with the communication situation where discourse is produced, but also includes how power and access shape and influence the production and distribution of the discourse itself. In this case, Victor Gao's discourse on the tariff war between China and the United States can be analyzed as a form of representation of the dynamics of global power and the struggle for access to the construction of international economic-political narratives.

Victor Gao does not speak as an ordinary individual, but as a public figure who has a fairly high social position both academically, politically, and ideologically. He is a former translator for Deng Xiaoping, a graduate of Yale Law School, and currently serves as Vice President at the Center for China and Globalization (CCG), a renowned think tank that often serves as an indirect representation of China's foreign policy voice. With this position, Gao has full access to various international media channels that allow him to convey Chinese narratives to the global public. This access is a concrete form of symbolic power: the power to speak, determine topics, and influence the perspective of the international public. In the context of the tariff war, Gao uses this access to redefine China’s position not as an aggressor, but as a victim of US protectionist policies.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze how Victor Gao, as a public figure and indirect representative of Chinese state ideology, shapes the construction of power and resistance through public discourse in the context of the tariff war between the United States and China. Using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach modeled by Teun A. Van Dijk, the analysis is conducted on the text structure (macro, super, and micro), as well as the socio-cognitive aspects and social contexts that underlie the production of discourse.

The findings of this study show a total of 36 (thirty-six) data extracted from Gao's debate transcript. From a macro-structural perspective, there were a total of 2 occurrences of data showing that Gao explicitly framed China's rise as a historical inevitability that could not be stopped by anyone, including the United States. He also constructed the tariff war as a form of aggression that was wrong and damaging to the global trade order, while simultaneously presenting China as a defender of free trade.

In the superstructural dimension, there were a total of 12 occurrences of data showing that Victor Gao structured his discourse very systematically: he opened by asserting China's

position, developed the argument through data and emotional narratives, and then closed with a moral and political appeal to the international community. This shows that the discourse structure used follows a strong and effective argumentative pattern to build credibility and persuasive influence.

The micro-structural dimension yields 22 of data, further broken down into semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements. Semantically, the data demonstrate how Gao uses historical background, presupposition, and nominalization to construct ideological meaning without always being explicit. Syntactically, the data shows with sentence structures tending to be complex yet coherent, with references and conjunctions strengthening the connection between ideas.

Stylistically, which involve repetition, indicating highly ideological word choice—for example, the use of terms like “law of the jungle,” “fight to the end,” or “gun to the head”—indicating China’s position as a victim of Western pressure but also as a dignified force ready to retaliate. Rhetorically, which involve metaphors, and the use of numbers or statistics, which are used to strengthen the emotional and logical appeal of the arguments presented. The use of numbers such as “125% retaliatory tariffs” or “1.4 billion people” strengthens the validity and impact of Gao’s arguments in the eyes of an international audience.

In addition to text structure, the analysis also encompasses the social cognitive dimension, were found that illustrate that Gao's opinions are shaped by and also represent the collective mental model of Chinese society that is anti-hegemonic and pro-multilateralism. His views not only reflect personal attitudes but also echo the grand narrative constructed by the Chinese state in response to political and economic pressure from the West.

Within the social context dimension, that shows Victor Gao's position as a public intellectual with extensive access to international media is part of a power mechanism. He has the privilege to voice his country's ideological position on the global stage, something that Van Dijk believes is closely related to power in discourse production. This access gives him symbolic authority to direct global opinion toward the narrative he constructs. These findings collectively confirm that Victor Gao's discourse is not simply a product of ordinary communication, but a symbolic political arena where narrative contestation between major world powers takes place. In this context, language becomes a primary tool in shaping political reality and creating opposition to the dominance of Western narratives. Through

Van Dijk's CDA, this research successfully reveals how seemingly neutral language structures actually convey specific ideologies, strategies, and interests.

B. Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, there are several things that can be suggested both for further academic studies and for general readers who are interested in the study of international political discourse. First, for researchers in the fields of linguistics, English literature, or media studies, Van Dijk's CDA approach has proven effective in analyzing the discourse of public figures who play a role in shaping global opinion. Therefore, similar research can be developed to analyze other figures from various countries or analyze other global political events. The use of data in the form of direct interviews, social media, or media editorials can enrich the variety of CDA study objects. Second, for researchers from the fields of international relations or political communication, a cross-disciplinary approach such as that used in this study can provide a deeper perspective on how power works not only physically or in policy, but also through language and narrative. Understanding political discourse will make a major contribution in analyzing how global powers convey their messages in a subtle but impactful manner. Third, for the general reader, this study is expected to open the understanding that the statements of public figures are not something that is free from ideology or interests. In a global world filled with information, it is important to read not only what is said, but also how and why it is said. Discourse is a field of power and resistance, and the ability to read it critically is the first step towards better political literacy. Finally, the author realizes that this study still has limitations, both in terms of data coverage and depth of analysis of cognitive and ideological aspects. Therefore, further research is needed to broaden the understanding of the role of discourse in the ever-changing dynamics of world geopolitics.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alisa is an undergraduate student in English Literature, Universitas Bangka Belitung. She was born on January 17th, 2000, in Badau, Tanjung Pandan, Indonesia. Currently residing Simpang Tiga, Belitung Timur, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Devy has pursued his education locally. He completed his elementary education at Elementary School 7 Simpang Renggiang in 2011, followed by Junior High School 1 Badau in 2014, and graduated from Vocational High School 1 Badau in 2017. Known for her loves to writing and reading, Alisa is an author of several poetry anthologies books. She is currently single.

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