

“Cage” Interpretation in Promoting the Construction of Anti-corruption Excerpted from the Governance of China

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Abstract—The Governance of China was published in October, 2014. This book includes a series of important statements proposed by Xi Jinping. It is a window for the international community to know the contemporary China. Xi’s Promoting the Construction of Anti-corruption in The Governance of China reflects a unique linguistic phenomenon “cage” framework. This paper first extracts the three major components of the “cage” framework under the guidance of frame theory, and then discusses some major features of language adopted by Xi Jinping to strengthen the understanding of the “cage” framework. Based on the frame theory of cognitive linguistics, this paper attempts to analyze some important points about Xi Jinping’s “promoting the construction of anti-corruption” and provide people with a theoretical basis to understand Xi’s thoughts more comprehensively.

Keywords—Xi Jinping; Cage; Framework; Anti-corruption; the Governance of China; Promoting the Construction of Anti-corruption

I. INTRODUCTION

The Governance of China[4] was published in October, 2014. This book is a compilation of Xi Jinping’s major works from November 15, 2012 to June 13, 2014. It includes speeches, talks, interviews, instructions, and congratulatory letters. 79 articles are arranged in 18 chapters in relation with the issues in China and the world. As a general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping has addressed a series of important theoretical and practical questions about the Party and the country in these changing times in *The Governance of China*.

The Governance of China is multilingually published, providing a window of observing and knowing China for readers from all over the world. Foreigners give relatively high comments on this book. The former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said he has benefited a lot from this book when he wrote a book review for *The Governance of China*. Robert Kuhn, the president of the Kuhn Foundation, praised that the book is a milestone file. Amazon Bookworm Paul in Park City “Paul” said: This book tells you all about a leader of

the fastest grown economy in the world. And Elizabeth C., the director of the Asian Studies Center of Economy Council on Foreign Relations even extracted around ten interesting and fascinating facts of Xi Jinping from the book. These high assessments fully reflect the strong interest and insights generated by foreign readers.

Anti-corruption plays a vital role in a country’s success or failure. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC was held in November 2012, Xi Jinping as a general secretary standing at a new historical starting point, has delivered a series of important speeches on deepening the reform of anti-corruption work and put forward many new requirements for it in the new situation, then indicated a new direction for China’s development.

In *The Governance of China, Combat Corruption* is regarded as a special topic, and the main points of three speeches of Xi Jinping are: the speech at the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the speech at the fifth group study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee which Xi Jinping presided over, and the speech at the Third Plenary Session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the 18th CPC Central Committee. This paper, under the guidance of the frame theory, attempts to analyze the “cage” framework in the above mentioned special topic, thus provide people with a more comprehensive and profound understanding to the speeches of Xi Jinping as a general secretary.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF FRAMEWORK THEORY

Framework theory is an important part of the theory of cognitive linguistics. The term “frame” was originally proposed as a psychology concept by anthropologist Bateson[2]. In 1975, Minsky[5], the artificial intelligence expert in the United States, first proposed the frame theory, and applied psychological theory in the field of artificial intelligence. The concept of “frame” was introduced into linguistics by the American linguist Charles Fillmore in the

mid-1970s; it is still the basis of “business event” framework of the classic examples. When Fillmore first used the notion of frame, he defined it as all the system of linguistic choice: the easiest cases are collections of words including choices of grammatical rules or linguistic categories. Later, he said that frames are ‘specific unified frameworks of knowledge or coherent schematizations of experience’. In 1994, Fillmore[1] proposed two concepts (slot and filler) in the frame theory. He believed that the property of frame is determined by a variety of information slots, each information slot has a certain amount of corresponding fillers. In recent years, George Lakoff has also made great achievements in the study of frame theory. He pointed out the role of political propaganda in the framework. In his book *Do not Think of an Elephant*[3], Lakoff used the frame theory of cognitive linguistics and vividly described his analysis of the political situation in the United States. Lakoff (2013) stated that the frame is to make the language consistent with your view of the world. It is not just language, it is the concepts. Language is to evoke these ideas. Only by forming a frame in his/her favor, one can make things achieve a multiplier effect. But so far, most domestic scholars focus the frame theory on studies of how to translate and how to teach reading while the frame theory is relatively seldom to be applied to the political textual analysis.

III. AN ANALYSIS OF THE “CAGE” FRAMEWORK

The information slot that is mentioned in the overview of frame theory refers to the components of the concepts in the frame. In fact, the process of generation of each discourse can be regarded as the process of a framework building by the author, and such a framework is also constituted by a number of conceptual components[6].

The analysis revealed that in the book *The Governance of China*, Xi Jinping as a general secretary visualizes the combating of corruption as a “cage”, and constructs the special topic as a “cage” framework: the course of weaving “cage”, trussing “cage” and managing “cage”. Each course was filled with informational slots and their corresponding fillers. The three slots in “cage” framework are interacting with each other and interspersing with each other, making the “cage” more strong and powerful. A ferocious tiger cannot demonstrate its courage and power when it is forced into a “cage”. So this special topic has addressed a clear idea of the determination of CPC Central Committee in firmly punishing corruption, strengthening the system of anti-corruption, strengthening the supervision, and controlling the power by means of borrowing “cage” framework theory.

A. Weaving the “Cage”

Weaving the “cage” is the primary condition in forming the “cage” framework. Xi Jinping stressed that we must first build a cage, that is, to strengthen the anti-corruption system when locking the wicked power into the “cage”. Strengthening the system is the basis; the corruption is unable to be controlled without a sound system. In the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Xi Jinping pointed that the more complicated the

situation, the heavier the tasks the Party will face, and the more we need to reinforce discipline.

To run the Party with strict discipline, we have to first and foremost implement a strict political discipline, which in turn starts from observing and safeguarding the Party Constitution. This requires precisely for all Party members to maintain in all circumstances a firm political belief, political stance, and a political orientation.

Secondly, Xi Jinping proposed a series of measures that should be taken to strengthen the fight against corruption in his speeches, including maintaining the intimate relationship between our Party and our people; making a clear distinction between public and private interests, devoting our Party to serving the public, and imposing strict self-discipline. He also stated that we must strengthen oversight over officials, giving particular attention to those who are in the most important position, how they exercise their power, and intensify mutual oversight within leadership. To strength oversight and inspection, and consciously accept the criticism and public oversight from the general public, an important guide is to build a “cage”, and strengthen supervision. The series of proposed measures wove the “cage” in the anti-corruption activities to convey the CPC Central Committee to promote the anti-corruption spirit, meanwhile, confined the cadres who do not have system of consciousness and no awe of the system into the rules. In order to better weave the “cage”, Xi Jinping stressed that establishing a sound system of combating corruption through both punishment and prevention represents our national strategy in the Third Plenary Session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the 18th CPC Central Committee. In 2013 the Central Committee issued the “Work Plan for Establishing a Complete System of Combating Corruption through Both Punishment and Prevention”. This is the document that guides our strategy.

B. Trussing the “Cage”

Weaving the “cage” is the first step to promote the construction of anti-corruption. What we should keep in mind is that the “cage” cannot play a role if it is too loose or the door is open. The chapter *Combat Corruption* in *The Governance of China* builds a lot of fillers repeatedly to truss the “cage” framework, focuses on improving the institutional mechanisms embodied in the anti-corruption. In the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Xi Jinping clearly proposed that we must improve the system of checking and overseeing the exercise of power, ensure government agencies to exercise their power in accordance with authorization and procedures, continue to implement and improve the leadership system and working mechanism for combating corruption, and give a full play to the role of the Party discipline inspection commissions, supervision departments, judiciary, and auditing agencies. In the fifth group session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee which he presided over, Xi Jinping again noted that we should prevent and fight corruption more properly and effectively, work harder to ensure the stringent enforcement of anti-corruption laws and discipline, thus give

further implication for the central point of view and attitude to improve the anti-corruption institutional mechanisms.

Xi Jinping as a general secretary designed closely to focus on building a “cage” and expanded framework on anti-corruption discourse in his each speech. Moreover, at the Third Plenary Session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the 18th CPC Central Committee, Xi Jinping’s speech on “Improve Our Party’s Conduction, Uphold Our Integrity and Combat Corruption” makes “cage” fastened, and this has laid the foundation for a deeper “cage” framework. In the Third Plenary Session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the 18th CPC Central Committee, it is pointed that we have to promote procedure-based exercise of power, strengthen oversight and inspection, and open up the channels for public compliant and oversight; strengthen the analysis of typical case, block all possible loopholes corruption and reform health care smoothly. Weaving the “cage” is the premise, trussing it is also very necessary. Both of them are indispensable in constructing the “cage” framework.

C. Managing the “Cage”

Xi Jinping stressed that a good system will become a paper tiger without responsibility and accountability. Managing the “cage” takes an important part in building the framework on combating corruption. Xi Jinping as a general secretary of the CPC Central Committee attaches great importance to this management of the “cage”. He paid much attention to strengthening corruption responsibilities. In the Third Plenary Session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the 18th CPC Central Committee, Xi Jinping gave quite a clear and specific emphasis on managing the “cage” framework and we can find many corresponding fillers in it. Xi Jinping stated that we will fight against corruption absolutely; we must remain resolute in wiping out corruption and show zero tolerance for it. Once a corrupted official is identified, we must conduct a thorough investigation. All the Party committees, Party discipline inspection commissions, and other relevant departments must fulfill their responsibilities.

In his speeches, Xi Jinping mentioned the importance of managing the “cage” as well as weaving it. Moreover, Xi Jinping said that there is no exception in the Party discipline, no matter who is involved, he/she should be investigated in the end, and it will not be tolerated. So the responsibility must be claimed, it must be checked when there is a corruption. For the most part, managing the “cage” is the key to promote the construction of anti-corruption. As for strengthening accountability, the fight against corruption will be more authoritative, and thus will get more fruitful achievements.

Xi Jinping builds the “cage” framework on promoting the construction of anti-corruption attentively. It is clearly shown that there are three slots: weaving “cage”, trussing “cage”, and managing “cage” frameworks. They are tightly interlocking with each other. The corresponding fillers in the main point of speech highlighted the construction of the “cage” framework,

and displayed the determination and spirit of CPC Central Committee on the promotion of anti-corruption in public vividly. Xi Jinping’s speeches of anti-corruption propaganda are logically close, clear, solemn and dignified.

IV. LANGUAGE USE IN “CAGE” FRAMEWORK

A. Vocabulary

Xi’s selection of the key words that appear in his speech is quiet wise. The right choice of these words adds much vitality to its discourse. The most representative word is “tiger”. Xi demonstrates his strong determination to punish corruption by stressing that “we should continue to catch “tiger” as well as “flies” when dealing with cases of leading officials in violation of the Party discipline and the state laws”. Since then, the word “tiger” was frequently used in Xi’s speech. The so-called “tiger” refers to those who are in high status and do the corruption, and “fly” refers to those who are not in very highly official status but damage peoples’ interests. Xi treats the greedy officials as “tiger”, on the one hand “tiger” shows the deep degree of severe nature of corruption with its big and high-impact features, on the other hand it also emphasizes the fact that a ferocious tiger will lose his/her power when he/she will be forced into the “cage”. In this way, Xi gives the authority to strengthen the “cage” framework. Additionally, Xi uses the Chinese idiom “leave marks when we tread on stones or grasp iron” twice, represents his strong determination in promoting the construction of anti-corruption in a deep way. Meanwhile, the choice of “tiger” and “fly” can catch the audience’s heart with a great appeal, also make the speeches more persuasive. Furthermore, Xi also uses another Chinese idiom “take a heavy dose of medicine to treat a serious disease” to present Central Committee’s determination. This can also indicate that Xi, as a general secretary takes a careful consideration when selecting the words in his speech.

B. Syntax

Another prominent language feature in Xi’s speeches is the usage of parallel structures in short phrases and sentences. This language strategy makes the fillers that are corresponded to the slots to be more full and complete, which in turn makes the whole discourse more sonorous and motivated, thereby strengthening the “cage” framework built on people’s minds. In the process of weaving the “cage”, Xi chooses many paralleled short phrases and sentences to show Central Committee’s strong determination in combating corruption, such as “All cases of corruption are investigated and prosecuted, and that all instances of graft are rectified; persevere our anti-corruption effort and remain vigilant against corruption and degeneracy”. And Xi uses “Our Party will lose its base, lifeblood and strengthen” to stress the importance of working style and better illustrates the bad nature of extravagance and hedonism for every Party members. And, he chooses the paralleled sentence “Party discipline is implemented, accountability is maintained, and performance is ensured” to show the mode of supervision and the enforcement of the law. When trussing the “cage”, Xi did a comprehensive and accurate overview of the anti-corruption

institutional mechanisms by saying “form a punishment mechanism to deter corruption, a warning mechanism to prevent corruption and a guarantee mechanism to curb corruption”. Again, Xi further reflects the anti-corruption institutional mechanisms and points out that the continuity and permanence of trussing the “cage” by proposing that “Institutions are of fundamental, overall and long-lasting importance”. Xi also uses “We would take a heavy dose of medicine to treat a serious disease, we must apply stringent laws to address disorder” to support his construction of managing the “cage”. We can find many other paralleled short phrases and sentences in Xi’s speech and they are all providing the support to build the “cage” framework, it is good for the Party members to accept the new spirit of Central Committee and think about their own behaviors.

C. Language Style

In addition to the above language means, the use of the well-known sayings is another highlight to strengthen the “cage” framework. Rich cultural heritage and life experience formed Xi’s style with sincerity and vitality. He is good at using well-known sayings in his speech, so he gives people a fresh and memorable feeling in the construction of the “cage” framework. When weaving the “cage”, Xi chooses a saying from Yue Xun (Yue Xun was a philosopher and historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty), that is “He who is good at governing through restriction should first restrict himself”, and here, Xi intends to remind that all leading cadres should first set an example to the anti-corruption issues. Then in the process of trussing the “cage”, Xi chooses the saying “Many worms will disintegrate wood, and a big enough crack will lead to the collapse of a wall” (from the book *The Book of Lord Yang Shang*, Yang Shang was a statesman, thinker and a major representative of the Legalists in the middle period of the Warring States) to indicate the necessity of unremittingly and constantly improving the institutional mechanisms to fight corruption. In order to well manage the “cage”, Xi stresses that every official must bear the following in mind: “Do not try dipping into the public coffers because a thieving hand is

bound to get caught.” Xi also states that some officials have a tendency as in the following: “When they are coming with the good and they are likely to regard it as something that they would never reach it; and when they meet the evil and they are most likely to shrink from it, as if they would thrust a hand into boiling water.” These sayings are meaningful, thought-provoking and sobering.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In order to effectively propagandize the special topic on *Combat Corruption* in the book of *The Governance of China*, Xi Jinping constructed a “cage” framework in his speeches. He treats the related philosophy, policy and institution in promoting anti-corruption as a “cage” to expand his speeches. This paper has analyzed some language phenomena based on the frame theory and listed three components of “cage” frameworks. This study should be of a great significance for a better understanding of Xi Jinping’s speeches and the anti-corruption spirit of Central Committee.

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