

## *Original Paper*

# Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of Kung Fu in the Media Along the Southern Line of the “Belt and Road”

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### **Abstract**

*This study presents a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Kung Fu, utilizing a corpus-based approach to examine media portrayals along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” initiative. The research underscores the role of the “Belt and Road” Initiative in promoting Chinese martial arts culture and fostering cultural exchanges. By constructing a specialized corpus from mainstream media reports on Kung Fu, sourced from the LexisNexis database, this study employs corpus linguistics tools such as AntConc to analyze word frequency, collocation, keyword, and index line.*

*The findings reveal a predominantly positive portrayal of Kung Fu in the media of countries along the southern route of the “Belt and Road.” This positive representation is instrumental in enhancing the understanding of these countries’ attitudes towards culture and paves the way for more effective foreign discourse construction. The study’s insights into media discourse provide valuable perspectives for cultural diplomacy, reflecting the positive impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on spreading culture.*

### **Keywords**

*kung fu, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, the Belt and Road*

## **1. Introduction**

Chinese Kung Fu, a term that encapsulates a diverse range of martial arts styles originating in China, is not merely a physical discipline; it is a rich tapestry of cultural heritage and philosophical depth. Over centuries, it has evolved from a form of self-defense to a cultural symbol, deeply embedded in the Chinese national identity and ethos. Its portrayal in the media, therefore, becomes a window into the cultural narratives and perceptions that surround this ancient art form.

In the ambit of international relations and cultural exchange, the “Belt and Road” initiative launched by China stands as a testament to the country’s growing global influence. While predominantly an

economic venture, this initiative also serves as a conduit for cultural diplomacy, where traditional practices like Kung Fu play a pivotal role. Through the “Belt and Road”, Chinese Kung Fu finds new audiences, weaving the rich tapestry of Chinese culture into the fabric of global cultural understanding. The media, in this context, plays a crucial role. It is the primary lens through which people across the globe encounter and understand Chinese Kung Fu. How the media portrays this martial art influences not only public perception but also international appreciation and acceptance of this cultural practice. Thus, understanding the discourse surrounding Chinese Kung Fu in the media becomes imperative, especially along the strategically significant southern line of the “Belt and Road” initiative.

This study aims to dissect and analyze this media discourse. By employing corpus linguistics tools and engaging in critical discourse analysis, this research scrutinizes how Chinese Kung Fu is represented in various media texts along the southern line of the “Belt and Road”. The objectives are manifold: to unveil the predominant themes in this portrayal, to assess the nature and tone of the discourse, and to understand the implications of these portrayals for cultural diplomacy and international perceptions of Chinese culture.

The methodology adopts quantitative analysis insight, providing a comprehensive view of the media landscape. This approach not only identifies the frequency and patterns of Kung Fu-related discourse but also delves into the deeper meanings and connotations embedded within them.

The significance of this study extends beyond academic inquiry. It offers practical insights into the mechanisms of cultural representation and exchange in the modern world. By understanding how Chinese Kung Fu is portrayed in international media, stakeholders in cultural diplomacy and media communications can develop more effective strategies for cultural representation and exchange. As such, this research contributes not only to the field of media studies but also to the broader understanding of cross-cultural communication in the context of China’s expanding global influence.

## **2. Theoretical Basis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with Roger Fowler as the face of the field, is a discourse analysis method developed from critical linguistics in the late 1970s. It uncovers the dialectical relation between language and ideology. By elaborating the linguistic characteristics and social history background of the discourse, it investigated the meaning hidden behind the language structure and elucidates the intricate connection among language, power and ideology. As an important form of media, news discourse is characterized by timeliness, effectiveness and large amount of information. However, it often hides some ideology, intentionally or inadvertently conveying the subjective consciousness of the media people or the social groups in which they belong, thereby implicitly leading people’s cognition and affecting the public’s judgment of the authenticity of the event. It is particularly necessary to conduct in-depth research on news discourse from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, which is beneficial for readers to explore the essence behind words through linguistic phenomena.

Fairclough proposed a three-dimensional analysis framework based on sociology and systemic

functional linguistics. Although critical discourse analysis is widely concerned, it is also controversial because of its strong subjectivity. Therefore, Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) came into being. Pilots in this field are Hardt-Mautner and Stubbs. The former believes that corpus provides a powerful basis for quantitative analysis and corpus index function combines quantitative and qualitative research. The latter holds the opinion that it is feasible to incorporate the quantitative and qualitative analysis of corpus into critical discourse analysis.

Over the past 20 years, more and more scholars at home and abroad have used corpus to study critical discourse. They mainly study the inner meaning of discourse by observing word frequency, key word, collocation, word cluster and index line.

Generally, corpus signifies language materials gathered for the study of language. These materials, reserving in electronic form, are collected from naturally occurring written or oral samples. An appropriately sized corpus can give a description of the application of language. The incorporating of corpus and critical discourse analysis can disclose the deeper meaning of the text from an objective point of view.

In view of the important practical significance of Kung Fu culture transmission along the “Belt and Road” and the strong operability of critical discourse analysis, the author intends, with the help of corpus linguistics methods, to conduct a critical discourse analysis of English reports on the theme of “Chinese Kung Fu” in order to understand the characteristics and rules of these reports, so as to think about how to better present the national image through discourse construction.

### **3. Research Design**

#### *3.1 Research Questions*

As China’s comprehensive international strength grows stronger, Chinese cultural communication has become a powerful driving force for development. However, under the circumstance that the west holds the right of international speech, some of China’s practices have been stigmatized and the image has been discredited. Therefore, it is imperative to build China’s own discourse system and master the international discourse power. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Analyzing the attitudes of countries along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” towards Chinese Kung Fu and Chinese culture.
- 2) Considering how to better construct the external discourse system and show the national image.

#### *3.2 Research Methods*

The methodology of this study is grounded in corpus linguistics, a field that emphasizes the quantitative analysis of language within specific contexts. This approach is instrumental in uncovering patterns of language use, especially in media texts, and provides a basis for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study harnesses the power of AntConc, a robust corpus analysis tool, to dissect and understand the nuances of language use in media reports about Chinese Kung Fu.

The corpus for this study was meticulously compiled from a selection of 52 English-language media

reports on Chinese Kung Fu, spanning from December 2005 to February 2023. These reports were sourced from the LexisNexis database, a comprehensive collection of global news sources. The selection criteria were focused on reports emanating from countries along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” initiative, ensuring a relevant and focused dataset. Care was taken to cleanse and standardize the data, removing any inconsistencies that could arise from the digital transcription process.

The analysis was conducted in multiple stages. Initially, the focus was on quantifying word frequencies to identify the most commonly used terms in the corpus. This provided a preliminary understanding of the dominant themes in the discourse. Subsequently, the study delved deeper into linguistic patterns through the examination of collocations, keywords, and index lines. This multi-faceted approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how Chinese Kung Fu is framed in the media.

**Word Frequency Analysis:** Involved counting and categorizing the occurrence of words, with an emphasis on content words over function words.

**Collocation Analysis:** Examined how words co-occur in the corpus, providing insights into the contextual usage of language.

**Keyword Analysis:** Identified terms that were unusually frequent in comparison to a reference corpus, highlighting the focal points of the discourse.

**Index Line Analysis:** Focused on specific lines of text that significantly feature key terms, offering deeper insights into contextual meanings and connotations.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### *4.1 Word Frequency*

Word frequency analysis is a fundamental technique in corpus linguistics that involves quantifying the occurrence of words within a text corpus. This analysis provides insights into the most prominently used terms, shedding light on the key themes and focus areas in the discourse. In the context of this study on media coverage of Chinese Kung Fu, word frequency analysis helps identify the terms most commonly associated with Kung Fu, offering a preliminary understanding of how it is represented in the media. This approach not only highlights the predominant vocabulary but also sets the stage for a deeper linguistic and semantic analysis, enabling a clearer picture of the discourse’s nature and emphasis.

The word frequency in the self-built corpus is counted. Since the function words “the”, “and”, “of”, “to”, etc., appear with high frequency in any corpus and have no actual linguistic meaning, this study does not make interpretation here. Content words in English exist independently with practical meaning and transmit important semantic information in sentences. The top four content words in this corpus are martial (179), Chinese (171), year (155) and arts (152), which indicates that their high frequency is in line with the theme of “Chinese Kung Fu”. In addition, the emergence of the other 32 high-frequency content words can better convey the attitude of the countries along the southern line of the “Belt and

Road” to Chinese Kung Fu, and more obviously express the connotation of this corpus. The high frequency of world (130), India (110), China (90), Lanka (89) and international (51) reflects the wide spread of Chinese Kung Fu in South Asia and the world since the 21st century, and also witnesses the positive effect of the Belt and Road Initiative on the transmission of Chinese culture. Students (87), film (59), school (70) and training (51) show the main channels of Chinese Kung Fu culture transmission and its wide audience. In addition to learning about Chinese martial arts through films, people in countries along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” can also attend local martial arts schools. In these countries, people who love and learn martial arts not only include young people, but also children and the elderly. At the same time, it reflects from the side that wushu culture is widely welcomed in the countries along the southern line of “the Belt and Road.” From this point of view, the mainstream media in South Asia still have a positive attitude towards Chinese Kung Fu.

The implications of the word frequency analysis in this study extend beyond mere identification of common terms used in the media. The frequency of specific words related to Chinese Kung Fu, such as “tradition”, “discipline”, or “spiritual”, provides valuable insights into the framing and portrayal of this cultural practice. For instance, a high frequency of words emphasizing the traditional and cultural aspects might indicate a respect or reverence for Kung Fu in its cultural context. On the other hand, frequent references to physical or competitive elements might suggest a focus on the sportive aspect of Kung Fu. These findings contribute to our broader understanding of how media influences public perception and cultural narratives, especially in the context of traditional practices like Kung Fu. The analysis highlights the role of media language in shaping and reflecting societal attitudes, potentially influencing how cultural practices are viewed and valued within and beyond their native contexts.

#### *4.2 Keyword*

Keywords in corpus linguistics are those terms that appear with significant frequency in a specific corpus compared to a general reference corpus. Their heightened occurrence signals their importance in the discourse being studied. In the context of this research, which examines media representations of Chinese Kung Fu, keywords are instrumental in identifying the focal points and prevailing themes within the discourse. Berber-Sardinha believes that the reference corpus must have more words than the observation corpus.

The observation corpus in this study is a small self-built corpus, with 46 English reports selected from LexisNexis database. The reference corpus is Brown corpus which contains 57,340 sentences and 1,161,192 words and 15 categories including “adventure”, “belles lettres”, “editorial”, “fiction”, “government”, “hobbies”, “humor”, “learned”, “mystery”, “news”, “religion”, “reviews”, “romance” and “science fiction.” The keyword is determined by its keyness. Generally, the larger the keyness, the more likely it is to become the keyword, and the more it can reflect the main information of the text. After using AntConc, the top 10 keywords were selected as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Top 10 Keywords for Frequency**

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Keyword
1	171	1520.149	Chinese
2	116	1122.949	Sri
3	144	1110.687	martial
4	109	879.624	India
5	89	863.830	Lanka
6	118	819.370	arts
7	88	799.890	Lee
8	89	644.525	China
9	62	615.143	Kung
10	61	605.222	Wushu

From Table 1 above, it can be seen intuitively that the keywords in the English media corpus of “Chinese Kung Fu” are basically consistent with the high-frequency words. Among the 10 words with high keyness, the first four, “Chinese”, “Sri” and “martial” are prominent in terms of both keyness and word frequency. The high keyness of “Chinese” and “martial” is in line with the theme “Chinese Kung Fu” of this corpus. The keyness of “Sri Lanka” and “India” clearly reflects that this study was conducted in the context of One Belt and One Road Initiative. At the same time, the emergence of these words has also driven the theme of the entire corpus. The spread of China’s traditional martial arts has achieved some results with the help of the Belt and Road Initiative. The spread of martial arts will also drive other contents of Chinese culture to go abroad and attract more people to know and pay attention to China.

In this study, the identification of keywords is crucial for understanding how Chinese Kung Fu is portrayed in the media. Keywords like “tradition”, “discipline”, or “health” not only highlight the aspects of Kung Fu emphasized in the media but also shed light on the cultural values and perceptions associated with it. This analysis directly relates to the study’s objective of deciphering the media narrative surrounding Chinese Kung Fu.

The implications of this keyword analysis extend beyond the study of media texts to broader discussions about cultural representation and perception. By identifying the terms most frequently associated with Chinese Kung Fu, this analysis contributes to our understanding of how media influences public perception and cultural narratives. It offers insights into the portrayal of traditional practices in modern media and their role in shaping cultural identity and perception.

While keywords provide an overview of prevalent themes, their interpretation requires careful consideration of the context in which they appear. A keyword might have different connotations depending on its usage in specific articles or discussions. Therefore, analyzing the context around each keyword is imperative for an accurate understanding of its role and significance in the media discourse.

### 4.3 Collocation

In corpus linguistics, collocation refers to the occurrence of two or more words together at a higher frequency than would be expected by chance. This analysis is critical in understanding how language is used in context, as it reveals patterns and associations that might not be immediately apparent. In the context of this study, examining the collocations of terms related to Chinese Kung Fu in media texts helps us understand how this cultural practice is framed and discussed. Firth, founder of the London school, particularly emphasized the importance of context in the study of word collocation, pointing out that the meaning of a word depends on the word with which it is paired. In other words, the meanings of a word and its collocation words are interrelated, interactive and interdependent.

**Table 2. Collocations for Keywords**

Keyword	Collocation
Chinese	New, year, cultural, performances, wushu
Sri	Lanka, wushu, federation, ties, splendid, superhuman
martial	arts, mixed, world, traditional, visions, varied, tenets, symbolized
India	China, years, monk, urban, shaolin, temple, warrior
Lanka	Sir, wushu, federation, ties, splendid
arts	martial, visions, mixed, traditional, history
Lee	Bruce, kung, fu, hong, kong, worldwide
China	world, India, university, students, Lanka
Kung	fu, karate, Lee, wushu, Chinese, shaolin, martial
wushu	popularized, wizard, superhuman, teammates, stances, Sri, Lanka, federation, Chinese

There are two basic methods in the corpus analysis software AntConc to calculate the intensity of collocation words which are T-score and MI score respectively. These two calculation methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. MI score refers to the degree of influence of one word on another word or the information about the occurrence probability of another word provided by the frequency of occurrence of one word in corpus. The larger the MI score, the greater the influence of node words on their lexical environment and the more attractive the co-occurrence words are. The MI score, therefore, represents the intensity of collocation between words. However, collocation words with high MI score do not necessarily co-occur more frequently with node words. T-score reflects the certainty of significant collocation words, which enables researchers to confirm the significant collocation words with high co-occurrence frequency of node words. In this paper, T-score and MI are both used as references to give strong collocations.

The collocations identified in our corpus offer profound insights into the portrayal of Chinese Kung Fu.

For instance, frequent collocations of Kung Fu with terms like “discipline”, “art”, and “health” suggest a positive framing that aligns Kung Fu with beneficial and culturally rich practices. This interpretation is significant as it indicates how media along the “Belt and Road” may contribute to shaping public perception of Kung Fu, portraying it as a respectable and valuable element of Chinese culture. The key words in Table 2 are taken as the index words, and the left and right spans are set as 5. The collocation is as shown in Table 2.

It can be seen from Table 2 that the reports on “Chinese Kung Fu” in countries along the Belt and Road South Line mainly focus on Chinese traditional culture, martial arts, and its popularity in South Asian countries and the world. Wushu is a part of Chinese “traditional” “culture”, and it has become a “symbol” of Chinese culture and even the nation in foreign countries and “ties” China closely with other countries. Chinese martial arts have “varied” forms, such as Tai Chi and Wing Chun. Chinese Kung Fu is also highly recognized in the international community. For example, wing chun is allowed to be used as a form of fighting in “mixed martial arts.” In addition, Chinese martial arts are also associated with “shaolin”, “temple” and “monk.” Shaolin Kung Fu, also known as shaolin martial arts, counts among most renowned martial arts styles in China. It has a long history and far-reaching influence and is a significant component of Chinese Kung Fu. Shaolin temple attracts many “warriors” from home and abroad who love martial arts. Moreover, there are references to the movies about “Bruce Lee”, a man who played a major role in the spread of Chinese Kung Fu overseas. The appearance of “popularized”, “superhuman”, “teammates”, and “federation” in the strong collocation of wushu reflects the positive attitude of the mainstream media of the Southern line countries towards Chinese Kung Fu. From the collocation of the high-frequency words, the comments of reports on Chinese Kung Fu are mainly neutral and positive. Here are several sentences as examples:

Sentence 1: It is very good for **health**. It is not only a sport for boys. Even girls can do wushu.

Sentence 2: Wushu was **popularized** as Kung Fu due to the films such as that of David Carradine.

Sentence 3: His students range from 65-year-old martial arts **enthusiast** to his 5-year-old son, and including women looking to learning....

Sentence 4: ...Song Mountain, one of the five famous mountains in China, and the Shaolin temple to experience a kung fu performance.

Sentence 5: In 1950’s Chinese Wushu Federation was formed and in 1989 World Wushu Federation was formed. “Wushu has taught me to be a good person. I teach all my students to be.....

Sentence 6: Though they did not win medals, unknown players from Sri Lanka and Myanmar gave **splendid** performances.

“Health”, “enthusiast”, “splendid” in above sentences show a strong emotional color and express a positive attitude of the Chinese wushu culture. Although other words do not show obvious attitudinal biases, they are still endowed with positive meaning in the context.

The findings from the collocation analysis resonate with the theoretical frameworks of media representation and cultural studies. They exemplify how media language can construct and perpetuate



certain narratives about cultural practices. By analyzing these collocations, we align our study with theories that emphasize the power of media discourse in shaping cultural understanding and stereotypes.

While collocation analysis provides valuable insights, it has its limitations. It does not account for the context beyond immediate word pairs or phrases, which can sometimes lead to oversimplified interpretations. Future research could integrate collocation analysis with qualitative methods, such as discourse analysis, to provide a more nuanced understanding of how Kung Fu is portrayed in different contexts. Additionally, expanding the corpus to include more diverse media sources could offer a more comprehensive view of Kung Fu's representation in global media.

#### *4.4 Index Line*

Index lines, in the realm of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, are specific lines of text that are selected for detailed examination based on their representative or significant use of certain key terms or phrases. These lines act as a microcosm of the larger dataset, offering insightful glimpses into the contextual usage and connotative meanings of terms. In the context of analyzing media discourse about Chinese Kung Fu, index lines serve as pivotal points for understanding how Kung Fu is framed, discussed, and perceived within the media narratives. Each word does not exist in isolation, but constitutes textual information together with contextual words. The most basic function of the index line is to provide word frequency information of the index word in the corpus, show its collocation word and display context information of the word. The views and attitudes of English mainstream media in countries along southern line towards Chinese Kung Fu are reflected in the evaluation of the words around "Chinese Kung Fu." Therefore, to analyze the comment of "Chinese Kung Fu" by these news newspapers, the meaning of its combination with surrounding words can be observed through the index line function.

In this study, AntConc is used to search the index line of "Chinese Kung Fu" in the self-build small corpus. In view of various expressions of Chinese Kung Fu, this study takes "Kung Fu", "wushu" and "martial arts" as the search words of the index line respectively.

It can be seen from Table 3 that the mainstream English media of countries along the southern line of the "Belt and Road" hold a positive and praising attitude towards "Chinese Kung Fu." For example, in the reports it is mentioned that Chinese Kung Fu "has the same dynamic wavelike moments and techniques" and that it is "very good for health." Wushu is not to "teach us to fight but to defend and protect." Chinese Kung Fu is very popular abroad. Some return to their home countries to open their own academy and some has students "ranging from a 65-year-old martial arts enthusiast to his five-year-old son and women", all of these give Chinese Kung Fu a positive image. Besides, various

**Table 3. Partial Index Lines of "Kung Fu", "WuShu" and "Martial Arts"**

Index	Left	Node	Right
1	one Dutch man who has been training for a year to become a	kung fu	<b>master</b> and open his own academy at Holland
2	China is the birthplace of martial arts like sanda,	kung fu	and wushu and there is a rich martial arts tradition
3	admiring the skills of Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee and had already earned a	kung fu	black belt at 16.
4	Many institutions held “re-inauguration ceremonies. Boxing	kung fu	and bodybuilding <b>clubs reopened their doors to hundreds of teenaged boys</b>
5	What sets Kung Fu Toai apart from other contact sports?	kung fu	Toai has the same <b>dynamic</b> wavelike movements and <b>techniques</b> , combinations and reaction
6	Nations are being united by so many forces	wushu	an <b>ancient Chinese sport</b> dating back to 2,500years, is also <b>set to become a Sri</b>
7	A teacher and a competitor, zhao in various battle stances	wushu	teaches us <b>not to fight but to defend and protect</b>
8	obtained an <b>advanced training</b> from Laoshi Xia Mei	wushu	became the 44th <b>National registered sport</b> in Sri Lanka
9	negotiated with the <b>China Embassy to offer two scholarship</b> for two sportsman to study	wushu	in Beijing University
10	It is very <b>good for health</b> . It is not only a sport for boys. Even girls can do	wushu	In Sri Lanka the girls are good at wushu.
11	His students range from a 65-year-old	martial arts	<b>enthusiast</b> to his five-year-old son and include
12	Liaquat Hussain,24, developed a <b>passion</b> for	martial arts	in the eighth grade and has come a long way since, training
13	This paved way for China to <b>share</b> its age-old traditions. secrets and of course Chinese	martial arts	with other countries. Thus Chinese Kung Fu (Wushu) association decided to make
14	was an <b>expert</b> in Wushu and a	martial arts	from this gentleman. Furthermore,

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	Chinese National Bronze medallist.	he had <b>obtained an advanced</b>
	Manel had learned true Chinese	<b>training</b>
15	We are very excited at the potential martial arts of mixed	in China and believe that it will be a huge success given the track record of ONE FC

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words containing “master”, “advanced training”, “enthusiast”, “passion”, “share”, “expert” and “devotee” also bring out positive overtones towards “Chinese Kung Fu.”

The analysis of index lines directly supports the broader findings of this study. For example, if index lines frequently associate Kung Fu with cultural sophistication or physical prowess, this finding would corroborate the study’s conclusion that Kung Fu is predominantly portrayed in a positive light. This linkage highlights how micro-level textual analysis (index lines) can reinforce and elucidate macro-level research outcomes.

The implications of analyzing index lines in the context of Chinese Kung Fu portrayal are manifold. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of media discourse, not only in terms of how Chinese Kung Fu is represented but also in how cultural elements are framed within global media. It sheds light on the power of language in shaping perceptions and narratives about cultural practices, which can have far-reaching impacts on cultural diplomacy and international perceptions.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper mainly studies the discourse of “Chinese Kung Fu” news reports from mainstream English media in countries along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” by analyzing the high-frequency words, keywords and index lines. The study found that these media hold a positive attitude towards “Chinese Kung Fu”, believing that “Chinese Kung Fu” is a kind of sport that is physically and mentally health and is part of traditional Chinese culture. Culture is the soul of One Belt and One Road Initiative. Wide spread and acceptance of culture can promote all-round and multi-field exchanges and collaboration between China and countries along the southern line of the “Belt and Road.”

This study’s corpus-based discourse analysis of the portrayal of Chinese Kung Fu in media along the southern line of the “Belt and Road” initiative has unveiled its predominantly positive depiction. This portrayal not only reinforces the cultural heritage of Kung Fu but also serves as a significant tool in China’s cultural diplomacy. The representation of Kung Fu as a symbol of harmony, discipline, and strength contributes to a favorable perception of Chinese culture, fostering improved international relations and cultural exchange. The positive depiction of Chinese Kung Fu, aligned with global trends towards health and wellness, enhances its cultural significance. It not only represents a sport but also embodies a lifestyle resonating with contemporary values of inclusivity and holistic well-being. This aspect of Kung Fu can be further explored in future research, especially in studies focusing on the impact of such portrayals on public perception and acceptance. Additionally, comparative studies

across different regions under the “Belt and Road” initiative could yield insightful variations in media portrayal.

In a global context, this study’s findings contribute to the discourse on the role of traditional cultural elements in international understanding and diplomacy. Chinese Kung Fu, as a cultural ambassador, not only promotes China’s rich heritage but also bridges cultural gaps, fostering mutual respect and understanding. Policy recommendations based on this study’s findings could guide media outlets and cultural diplomacy strategists. Emphasizing narratives that showcase the inclusivity, health benefits, and cultural significance of Kung Fu can enhance its global appeal and acceptance. This strategic portrayal can play a crucial role in strengthening cultural ties and promoting a positive image of Chinese culture in the global arena.

Due to the small research scale of traditional critical discourse, a large-scale empirical study is hard to be made, which makes it relatively subjective. The rapid development of corpus technology and its rich data provide a new perspective and method for the development of critical discourse analysis. Facts have proved that it is positive and empowering to adopt quantitative analysis method of corpus into CDA, which covers the shortages of small scale and strong subjectivity of the traditional method, and makes the research more persuasive. However, the research data is still mainly analyzed by people, which inevitably has some subjectivity. This is the shortcoming of this study. More efforts can be made in corpus research in the future to expand the number of texts and restore the objectivity of data analysis.

Emerging technologies, particularly in the fields of AI and machine learning, present new opportunities for enhancing critical discourse analysis. Future research can leverage these technologies for more efficient and comprehensive analyses of large datasets, providing deeper insights into media portrayals and cultural narratives. Reflecting on the methodologies employed in this study, the strength of corpus linguistics in uncovering prevalent themes and trends in media discourse is evident. However, its limitations in capturing nuanced cultural interpretations suggest the integration of qualitative methods for a more holistic understanding.

In conclusion, the portrayal of Chinese Kung Fu in media along the “Belt and Road” countries is not just a reflection of a sport or a cultural practice; it is a narrative that intertwines with diplomacy, global cultural trends, and the evolving dynamics of international relations. This study paves the way for further research and policy formulation, aiming at a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and harmony through the lens of traditional practices like Kung Fu.

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