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**ОБЩНОСТЬ И РАЗЛИЧИЕ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЙ ДИСКУРСОВ ИНИЦИАТИВЫ
«ОДИН ПОЯС ОДИН ПУТЬ» В КИТАЙСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ И СТРАНАХ
СРЕДНЕЙ АЗИИ. МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ МЕДИА-АНАЛИЗА**

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Цель настоящей статьи – охарактеризовать дискурс, сложившийся вокруг инициативы «Один Пояс Один Путь» (ОБОР) в различных языковых, культурных, профессиональных областях путем анализа текстовых корпусов, содержащих, в одном случае, публикации, опубликованные высшими органами КНР, а в другом случае – новостные и обзорные статьи, опубликованные влиятельными медиа-ресурсами стран Средней Азии. Основной целью описанного в статье анализа, в свою очередь, является предоставление содержательной характеристики двух дискурсов, выявление различий, сходств и зависимостей между ними и охарактеризование таких зависимостей. Помимо выводов, касающихся структуризации выявленных понятий (концептов) относительно дискурсов, в статье описаны конкретные случаи, представляющие, по мнению авторов, значимость, силу их неочевидности для широкой публики, а также представлено мнение авторов относительно причин такой значимости. Особое внимание уделяется применению дискурс-анализа для определения сути инициативы «Один Пояс Один Путь».

Ключевые слова: анализ дискурса; корпусный анализ; международные отношения; прикладная лингвистика; экономический пояс Шелкового пути; страны Центральная Азия; ШОС; концепт; категория; кодирование.

**КИТАЙ ЭЛ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНДА ЖАНА ОРТО АЗИЯ ӨЛКӨЛӨРҮНДӨ «БИР АЛКАК, БИР
ЖОЛ» ДЕМИЛГЕСИНИН ДИСКУРСТАРЫНЫН КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯСЫНЫН ЖАЛПЫЛЫГЫ
ЖАНА АЙЫРМАСЫ. МЕДИА-ТАЛДООНУН МЕТОДОЛОГИЯЛЫК АСПЕКТТЕРИ**

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Бул макаланын максаты – КЭРдин айрым жогорку органдары тарабынан жарыяланган жарыялоолордун, ошондой эле Орто Азия өлкөлөрүнүн таасирдүү медиа ресурстары тарабынан жарыяланган жаңылык жана сереп салуу түрүндөгү макалалардын тексттерине талдоо жүргүзүү аркылуу ар түрдүү тилдик, маданий, кесиптик тармактарда «Бир алкак, бир жол» демилгесинин тегерегинде пайда болгон дискурста мүнөздөмө берүү болуп саналат. Макалада сүрөттөлгөн талдоо жүргүзүүнүн максаты, өз кезегинде, эки дискурста маңыздуу мүнөздөмө берүү, алардын ортосундагы айырмачылыктарды, окшоштуктарды жана бири-бирине көз карандылыкты аныктоо жана мындай көз карандылыкты мүнөздөө болуп саналат.

Дискурстарга карата аныкталган түшүнүктөрдү (концепттерди) түзүмдөштүрүү менен байланышкан корутундулардан тышкары, макалада авторлордун пикири боюнча, кеңири эл үчүн айкын эместиктин күчүнүн маанилүүлүгүн бере турган конкреттүү учурлар сүрөттөлгөн, ошондой эле мындай маанилүүлүктүн себебине карата авторлордун пикири берилген. «Бир алкак, бир жол» демилгесинин маңызын аныктоо үчүн дискурс-анализди колдонууга өзгөчө көңүл бөлүнөт.

Түйүндүү сөздөр: дискурста талдоо жүргүзүү; корпустук талдоо; эл аралык мамилелер; колдонмо лингвистика; Жибек-Жолу экономикалык алкагы; Борбордук Азия өлкөлөрү; ШКУ; концепт; категория; коддоо.

**SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF DISCOURSES OF
“ONE BELT ONE ROAD” INITIATIVE IN THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND COUNTRIES
OF CENTRAL ASIA. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MEDIA ANALYSIS**

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The present article aims to provide description to the discourse of “One Belt One Road” (OBOR) initiative in different language, culture and professional environments by applying analysis of text corpuses. The first corpus contains texts

published by some of the highest authorities of the People's Republic of China; the second corpus is formed by news articles and reviews from the most influential media sources of Central Asian countries. Main purpose of the analysis described in the article is to provide an informative characteristic for both discourses, identification of differences, similarities and dependencies between them and description of those dependencies. Apart from conclusions regarding structuration of identified concepts within the discourses, the article describes concrete cases that constitute, in the opinion of the authors, certain significance due to that fact that they are not recognized by the general public; the article also provides ideas about possible reasons for that significance. A special attention is paid to the application of discourse analysis for understanding of the essence of "One Belt One Road" initiative.

Keywords: discourse analysis; corpus analysis; political sciences; international relations; applied linguistics; One Belt One Road; Silk Road Economic Belt; Central Asia; SCO; concept; category; codification.

"One Belt One Road" (OBOR) Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping during his "Astana Speech" in 2013 [1] remains a term that every researcher is free to interpret in accordance with own cultural, educational and scientific background. Unlike other, closely related projects like "Silk Road Foundation" OBOR lacks any clear boundaries, internal structure and even relation to any particular area of activity, that can easily be proved by the most credible examples¹. Head of the Educational Department of PRC Government Yuan Guiren sees OBOR as a basis for export of Chinese professional education [2]. Ministry of Foreign Affairs adds "Ice Silk Road" to already known "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "Maritime Silk Road", expanding OBOR to the North Pole[3]. During the 19th Party Congress OBOR was mentioned with regard to the modernization of People's Liberation Army and "Destiny of the Humankind" [4]. Now, OBOR discourse is extended from the "fight against poverty" in Africa [5] to the "scientific cooperation" with Finland [6], let alone other "traditional" aspects like "infrastructure", "development of North-West region" and "integration with EuroAsEc" [7].

Accordingly, OBOR receives different interpretations from foreign political and economic analysts, journalists and public figures. Even taking one particular region, such as Central Asia, a researcher may face different ways to understand the nature of OBOR. Some consider OBOR as a geopolitical tool to expand China's influence on Central Asia, threatening traditional Russian dominance in the region[8]. Other speak of relation between OBOR and regional integration platforms such as "Nurly Zhol" [9]. The discourse unites persons, organizations, cities, countries and regions; aspects of economy, finance, industry, infrastructure, media, environment protection, security and geopolitics in their interconnections that may be strong or weak, obvious and hidden, direct and indirect.

The base for tracing the influence of Chinese discourse on Central Asian discourse and vice versa

with regard to each specific concept is are common concepts that, according to our research, make 32,2 % for the first (149 concepts in total) and 30,0 % (160 concepts in total) for the second respectively. Obviously, unique concepts and commonality ration by itself are also valuable.

Chinese text corpus was constructed from 57 OBOR-related official publications from Chinese highest level political institutions – Party Congress and its Politburo, National Congress and its Standing Committee and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Relation of a text to OBOR was defined by at least one mention of keyword² in the text. With a view to enhance the relevance of extracted concepts, the codification was applied only to titles, introductory paragraphs and paragraphs containing the keyword. Central Asian text corpus contains 810 articles published on the websites of 12 most visited³ media sources in four countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (three sources per country). The choice of the countries was determined by the definition of "Central Asia" given in Britannica[10] minus Turkmenistan due to its specific nature manifesting in the policy of strict neutrality and closed society [11].

Concept extraction from the corpuses was conducted by using different methods. Codification of the Chinese corpus was conducted manually with help of Atlas.ti, "powerful workbench for the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and video data"[12] developed by Thomas Muhr. Choice of the codification method was determined by specific linguistic characteristics of Chinese language such as morphology and syntax making automatized methods by explorative research merely applicable. On the contrary, Central Asian corpus, firstly, contained texts in Russian that, as a flexive language, can be easier operationalized and secondly, counted 14,2 times more texts. Accordingly, combination of text mining and merge of word-codes into concept-codes was a justifiable solution.

¹ However, some concrete organizations may be related to OBOR, such as Silk Road Foundation (丝路基金), Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce (丝绸之路国际总商会)[31] etc.

² Expression "一带一路" (Ch. "One Belt One Road") was used as a keyword

³ Rating of the media source was defined with help of Alexa's service "Country's top 50"[32]

Table 1– Categorization of Discourses

Category	Number of concept-codes in		
	Chinese discourse	Central Asian discourse	both (common)
Perception	0 (not codified)	2	0
Country	24	47	16
Territory	52	41	6
Organization	31	29	5
Area of activity	18	21	17
Person	24	22	4

Being aware of the weakness if the mixed method, may need to mention that analyzing different amount of texts of different nature and in different languages requires flexible approach. For better visualization each of the concept-codes should be classified as one of several modularity classes (categories):

1. Perception (e.g. “positive”, “negative”);
2. Country (e.g. “Afghanistan”, “Austria”, “China” etc.);
3. Territory (e.g. “Xinjiang-Uighur”, “Pacific”, “Chongqing” etc.);
4. Organization (e.g. “ACEAN”, “Nurly-Zhol”, “CSTO” etc.);
5. Area of activity (e.g. “Logistics”, “Military&Security”, “Science” etc.);
6. Person (e.g. “Xi Jinping”, “Zhang Dejiang”, “Vladimir Putin” etc.).

By the categorization we took into account approximate number of categories required and relevance for social and political research. Regarding the number, it should be mentioned that an effective way to apply modularity classes for visualization is color; accordingly, the number of categories should not exceed seven if take the classical basic colors proposed by Isaak Newton [13]. Concerning the differences by the categorization of both discourses may should first analyze the number of concept-codes for each category:

First observation that is easy to explain is that Chinese discourse contains more “territory”-related concepts, while Central-Asian discourse considers the “international perspective” more. Category of “territory” in the Chinese discourse is represented mainly by such codes as “Hunan”, “Heilongjiang”, “Liaoning”, “Macao” – in other words, with territorial structure of China itself. Speaking of OBOR, Chinese politics consider its potential use for concrete regions and cities. The more “internationalized” view of Central Asian observers and public persons may have (among the other) following explanations:

1. Lack of clear understanding of OBOR; lack of concrete projects;

2. Role of the Central Asia as transit region in terms of the logistic corridor from China to Europe;
3. Smaller territory in comparison to China; less importance of administrative units.

Another observation is that, in spite of the factual distinction in the concepts, the number of them for other categories (“organization”, “area of activity”, “person”) remains almost equal for both discourses. Speaking of the category of perception, the relevant concepts were considered irrelevant for the Chinese discourse due to the specific style that is characteristic for official political publications that typically contain a glut of positive expressions and avoid any negative-connoted words, even in case of negations.

Considerably high commonality ratio in case of the category of country is to explain primitive through that fact that the number of relevant agents on the international stage should be similar for neighbouring countries. For its part, category of “area of activity” shows almost absolute commonality ratio due to the fact of unification that was applied in order to create corresponding concept-codes.

Low commonality ratio in other categories (13 %, 16 % and 17 % of common concepts respectively to the mean value of concepts for both discourses) points to the deep distinction between them in terms of content. It can be assumed that Central Asian media receive information from mediators (e.g. Russian news agencies) that transform and select original information. Anyway, a more plausible explanation is orientation of a political organizations (in case of Chinese discourse) and media sources (in case of Central Asian discourse) on their own audience possessing specific knowledge and expectations.

More precise analysis implies considering features of particular concept-codes, while the key feature is frequency of use. However, being different in terms of amount of text, two corpuses present incompatible numbers. For example, the most popular concept in the Central Asian corpus (“China”) is used 7881 times, while the most popular concept in Chinese corpus (“Economy”) is used only 210 times. Accordingly, it

Table 2 – Popularity classes

Popularity class (condition for assignment, percent)	Popularity	Numeral values for			
		Chinese discourse		Central Asian discourse	
		Condition	Codes assigned	Condition	Codes assigned
A (50 % <= C <= 100 %)	Highest	109,5 <= C <= 219	1	3940,5 <= C <= 7881	2(1)
B (25 % < C <= 50 %)	High	54,75 <= C < 109,5	5	1970,25 <= C < 3940,5	5
C (10 % < C <= 25 %)	Signific.	21,9 <= C < 54,75	11(10) ¹	788,1 <= C < 1970,25	12
D (3 % < C <= 10 %)	Medium	6,57 <= C < 21,9	29	236,43 <= C < 788,1	17
E (0 % < C <= 3 %)	Low	0 < C <= 6,57	103	0 < C < 236,43	124

was necessary to create a “common denominator” to compare them.

The problem was solved by creating an ordinal variable “Popularity class” that may have different values in accordance with the frequency of use relatively to the maximum frequency of use within particular text corpus that is taken for 100 %. To avoid unnecessary sophistication, the number of classes was restricted to five.

As seen, classification of concept-codes based on relative popularity gave surprisingly similar results for both corpuses, especially regarding first three classes. To some extent, this phenomenon may be explained through that fact that most popular concept-codes usually belong to the category “Area of activity” (for example: “Economy”, “Law”, “Science”, “Military&Security”) and are not that numerous as others (except of the category “Perception”). By this, concepts related to areas of activity dominate the both Chinese and Central Asian discourse. Another important reason is that top-classified concept-codes tend to be common for both corpuses. For example, “Economy” is assigned to class “A” both in Chinese and Central Asian discourse, as well as “Finance&Credit” and “Logistics” to class “B”.

Generally, tendency to be assigned to the same or at least neighboring popularity classes is clear for common concepts, for example: “Science” (“B” and “C”), “Geopolitics” (“C” and “C”), “Media” (“C” and “D”). However, the more concrete the concept is, the less the tendency reveals: “Zhang Dejiang” (“C” and “E”), “Russia” (“E” and “C”), “Shanghai” (“E” and “D”).

Generally, popularity of certain concepts within the discourses does may be explained by common sense and general knowledge, like high role of Russia in the Central Asian discourse and President Xi Jinping in Chinese discourse. Some anomalies are explained through the imperfection of codification methods, like high frequency of the word “Shanghai” that in fact is largely devoted not to the city in China, but to the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). However, number of concepts may be considered eye-catching.

In the Chinese discourse, surprisingly important is the concept of military and security (class “B” in the Chinese discourse, but class “D” in the Central Asian discourse). Technically, this is largely due to the already mentioned above publication during the 19th Party Congress (used 17 times of 55) [4]. Speaking of the content, security discourse may be explained through the territorial features of Chinese investment and cooperation policy. For example, the second article with a high content of security-related words (10 of 55) is devoted to the Sino-African cooperation [5]. As known (also from high-level Chinese sources), China actively assists Africa countries (especially East-African countries like Rwanda and Kenya) in their economic and infrastructure development [14], while this region is considered by many researchers as region with considerably low level of public security and stability [15]. It appears to be natural that Chinese politicians stress importance of protecting interests of their investors.

African aspect in OBOR discourse is remarkable by itself in terms of its significance (popularity class “C”, highest ranked concept-code in the category of territory in the Chinese discourse). It appeared in the highest-level discourse first during the spring and summer 2016 [16; 17], to that time its popularity is mainly due to the visit of the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Congress Zhang Dejiang to Zambia during the 134 Congress of the African Union [14]. However, the main reason for the significance of this aspect is Forum for Sino-African cooperation that took place recently, in September 2018 in Beijing [5]. Remarkable is the remoteness of the East Africa from what the general public usually understands as “Silk Road”. Looking at OBOR map presented by Mercator Institute of China Studies, however, may can trace the way of Maritime Silk Road from India to the east coast of Africa and further to the Red Sea [18], what

explains desire of China to develop cooperation with the region.

Same reason may have relatively frequent mention of Arab countries (mainly to the “Policy of China toward Arab countries” published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [19]). Interesting is that this document was published several months before the African discourse started and 2,5 years before the Forum of Sino-African Cooperation.

Cooperation with Italy connects together Maritime Silk Road and other European projects of China like Trans-European Transportation Network by inclusion of such Northern Adriatic ports as Trieste and Venice as well as Mare Torreon and Genoa-Werner into the maritime transportation system, which explains high importance of Italy in the Chinese discourse of OBOR (class “D”), as well as appearance of names as the 57th Prime Minister of Italy Paolo Gentiloni [20] and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Angelino Alfano [21] in the relevant Chinese high-level publications.

Another point is low level of environmental discourse in Central Asia (class “E” in Central Asia and class “C” in China respectively). One explanation could be different environmental situation: although according to EPI index China and Central Asia are ranked generally similar [22], personal impression of Chinese people of the Central Asian environmental situation tend to be relatively positive. At the same time, late industrialization of Central Asian countries could influence perception of their people in a way of achieving industrialization targets by the cost of nature environment, provoking suspicion and mistrust to environmental activities.

Existence of agrarian aspect in OBOR discourse is remarkable by itself (class “D” both in Chinese and Central Asian discourse). Speaking of the Central Asian perspective, main part of citations is related to Chinese investments into agrarian sector, such as construction of agrarian park in “Chuiskaya Oblast” region of Kyrgyzstan that is expected to create 30 000 workplaces and attract Chinese investments up to one billion US dollars. According to the article published on 24.KG, whole production is dedicated to export to China [23]. On the contrary, in the Chinese discourse, related words are used in relatively abstract context of a general development without any mentions of targets of export. Moreover, they are usually related to clearly internal Chinese development projects such as Economic Belt of Changjiang, development of Beijing, Tianjing and Hebei and fight against poverty [24], which points to desire to diversify sources of food materials and ensure food security of the country.

Regarding public figures relevant for the discourse, apart from the President Xi Jinping may be able to mention also Chairman of the Standing Committee

of the National Congress Zhang Dejiang (张德江) and Vice-Director of the Department of State Zhang Gaoli (张高丽). Frequent appearance of Zhang Dejiang in the OBOR discourse appears to be natural, on the contrary, Zhang Gaoli is mentioned in high-level OBOR-related publications primarily due to the development of Gansu province that belong to the North-West region of China and therefore plays an important role in development of OBOR initiative [25]. In the Central Asian discourse, beginning from the June 2016, Zhang Gaoli plays an important role in coordination of cooperation with Kazakhstan. Apart from the integration of already mentioned regional project “Nurly Zhol” [9], Zhang Gaoli maintains dialog with President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Prime Minister Bakhytzhan Sagintaev and Vice Prime Minister Askar Mamin with regard to specific aspects of cooperation (for example, illumination of barriers for trade [26]).

Finally, unique concepts constitute special interest in terms of possible contradictions and inconsistencies, and therefore are of a great value for a researcher. One of the most interesting concepts of the Central Asian OBOR discourse is Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) that, for some reasons, appears in the Central Asian discourse exclusively (class “C”). Usually, SCO and OBOR are barely connected in the Central Asian publications; one is mentioned with another whether as alternative or structural part. Interestingly, it also presents a case in which Central Asian media broadcast Chinese point of view to relation between OBOR and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Consider the following opinion expressed in the “Perspectives of the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt” issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China along with other governmental offices and republished by numerous Media sources in Central Asia: «To strengthen a role of multilateral mechanisms, to disclose all advantages of such multilateral mechanisms as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), China ACEAN (10+1 format), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Forum “Asia-Europe” (ASEM), Dialogue on cooperation in Asia (DSA), the Meeting on interaction and measures of trust in Asia (SVMDA), the Forum of the Chinese-Arab cooperation, Dialogue China – the Gulf Cooperation Council (China-SSAGPZ), Economic cooperation of the Subregion of Big Mekong (SBM), the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and also to strengthen relations with the relevant states, to involve more states and regions into implementation of an initiative of “One belt and one road”» [27].

This voluminous citation provides a perspective of how comprehensive and ambitious the idea of OBOR is. Uniting literally all significant integration projects with Chinese participation, as long as any

action taken within ACEAN, APEC, SCO etc. may be treated as part of OBOR, it may be called a “superintegration project”.

To get an insight into domestic understanding of OBOR, may need to focus on concepts unique for the Chinese OBOR discourse. We could call numerous internal-oriented development programs such as already mentioned “Changjiang Economic Belt” (长江经济带), “Tianjing, Beijing, Hebei” (京津冀), “Four Aspects” (四个全面), “Five Aspects”(五位一体), “Two Century Goals”(两个一百年) etc., while the first two concepts along with OBOR itself form so-called “Three Strategies” (三大攻略) [28]. Thus, OBOR in the Chinese discourse is structurally equal to the development program of Beijing, Tianjing and Hebei.

An obvious hierarchical collision may be resolved by admitting that OBOR, unlike mentioned organizations and projects, lacking central coordination and apparatus of management, presents no more and no less than idea of participation of China in the development of foreign markets, industry, logistics and other infrastructure. In other words, if apply this approach, we may consider OBOR as successor of another global concepts, primarily “Open Policy” (对外开放)[29] and “Going globally” (走出去) [30] by Deng Xiaoping. Considering examples of economically developed countries may be able to take “Open Policy” for China-oriented and “Going Globally” for export-oriented policy, than OBOR, finally, should stress export of investments, education and cultural values.

Thus, even basic discourse analysis is able to provide a reliable and relatively objective basis for descriptive research. An obvious disadvantage, however, is represented by two factors. First, conceptualization of the discourse and codification of words are left to the decision of the researcher. Accordingly, this kind of analysis may be relevant mainly for an explorative or comparative research; otherwise, conceptualization and codification need strong criteria admitted at least by certain significant part of the academic community. It brings us to the second issue: it appears to be unlikely that even two members of a particular small research group with a similar background will achieve are able to reach agreement regarding meaning of each particular semantic entity, let alone all the multinational and multilingual research community, which may and should give cause for concerns about reliability of the research.

Again, there may be two solutions. The first one implies deep and comprehensive description of research methods, including thesaurus used for codification and at least principles of categorization. The second one is applying standardization at least within particular scientific schools, leaving room for

every researcher to choose between them or create an own.

Irrespective of solutions to individual problems, it appears that discourse analysis will take one of the leading positions in the modern applied linguistics due to the instant growth of the information field and need to react to changing trends in the mass perception of particular concepts, their emergence and disappearance. Discourse analysis is hard to underestimate in such fields as market research, security, public policy and even public health. Developing of the discourse analysis as a socially useful discipline within applied linguistics, thus, should be recognized by the academic community as an important direction for development of the liberal sciences.

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 33. (Footnotes)
 34. 1 Number in brackets shows an amount of concept-codes participating on higher level analyses; factual amount of codes may be higher due to the special features of the discourses.