

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: BASED ON THE SPEECHES OF XI JINPING

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Abstract. *This article explores the use of phraseological units in political discourse, specifically examining their function and significance in the speeches of Xi Jinping, the president of the people's republic of China. Phraseological units, including idioms, proverbs, and set expressions, are instrumental in conveying political ideologies, cultural values, and rhetorical strategies. The study highlights how such units reinforce ideological messaging, enhance persuasiveness, and contribute to the distinctive style of political communication within the Chinese context.*

Keywords: *Phraseological units, political discourse, Xi Jinping, chinese idioms, ideological language, confucian values, national identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Political discourse is a specialized form of communication that is used by political actors to achieve ideological, persuasive, and strategic goals. It is characterized by its formal register, strategic ambiguity, metaphorical richness, and frequent use of phraseological units (PUs). In the context of chinese political discourse, phraseological units, particularly those rooted in classical chinese literature and traditional culture, serve as powerful rhetorical tools.

Xi Jinping, as the highest political figure in China, frequently employs idiomatic and culturally loaded expressions in his public addresses. These units not only function as linguistic devices but also reflect broader political narratives and national identity. This paper analyzes a selection of Xi Jinping's speeches to uncover the patterns, functions, and implications of phraseological units in modern chinese political discourse.

Phraseological units: Definitions and classifications. Phraseological units, also known as idiomatic expressions, are stable combinations of words whose meaning cannot always be deduced from the meanings of the individual components. According to Vinogradov (1977), phraseological units are characterized by semantic unity, reproducibility, and idiomatic meaning. In political discourse, they can take the form of:

- Idioms (e.g., "kill two birds with one stone")
- Proverbs (e.g., "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step")

- Set expressions or clichés (e.g., "social harmony")
- Metaphorical collocations (e.g., "economic engine")

In the chinese context, chengyu (成语), which are four-character idioms often derived from classical texts, play a prominent role.

Political discourse and its functions. Political discourse serves to legitimate authority, persuade the public, and articulate national visions. It is often metaphorical, symbolic, and ideologically charged. The use of phraseological units enables politicians to draw on shared cultural and historical knowledge, thereby enhancing the emotional and cognitive impact of their speech.

Methodology. The study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to examine selected speeches delivered by Xi Jinping from 2012 to 2024. The speeches were drawn from official publications and databases such as *Qiushi* Journal and Xinhua News Agency transcripts. Phraseological units were identified, categorized, and analyzed based on their semantic fields, rhetorical functions, and ideological implications.

Findings and discussion.

1. Cultural resonance and traditional wisdom

Xi Jinping frequently uses classical chinese idioms to draw on traditional values and confucian thought. Examples include:

- “不忘初心，方得始终” (*bù wàng chū xīn, fāng dé shǐ zhōng*) – "Never forget why you started, and you can accomplish your mission." This phrase emphasizes perseverance and loyalty to one's original aspirations. It resonates deeply with confucian ideals of moral integrity and self-cultivation.

- “修身齐家治国平天下” (*xiū shēn qí jiā zhì guó píng tiān xià*) – "Cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the state, and bring peace to the world." This expression outlines the confucian path to social harmony and moral governance.

These idioms serve to align modern political objectives with ancient philosophical traditions, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of policy directions.

2. Ideological messaging and national goals

Phraseological units are employed to promote core ideological values such as socialism, patriotism, and national rejuvenation. Consider the following examples:

- “中国梦” (*Zhōngguó mèng*) – "The chinese dream" This phrase functions as a conceptual metaphor encapsulating the nation's collective aspirations for prosperity, power, and cultural revival.

- “打铁还需自身硬” (*dǎ tiě hái xū zì shēn yìng*) – "To forge iron, one must be strong oneself."

- It underscores the importance of internal discipline and strength, particularly in the context of anti-corruption campaigns.

These units function as thematic anchors in Xi's discourse, condensing complex policies into memorable, ideologically saturated expressions.

3. Rhetorical effectiveness and audience engagement

Phraseological units enhance the aesthetic quality and emotional appeal of political speech. They facilitate audience engagement through:

- **Repetition:** Reiterating certain idioms reinforces key messages.
- **Parallelism:** Structuring idiomatic phrases in parallel syntax adds rhythm and emphasis.
- **Emotional evocation:** Using culturally resonant idioms triggers collective memories and national pride.

For instance, in international speeches, Xi often uses idioms to emphasize cooperation and mutual respect, such as:

- **“和而不同”** (*hé ér bù tóng*) – "Harmony without uniformity"

A classical concept advocating peaceful coexistence despite differences.

Implications for political communication. The strategic use of phraseological units in Xi Jinping's speeches illustrates several broader trends in political communication:

1. **Localization of global concepts:** Global ideas such as development and governance are reinterpreted through culturally embedded expressions.
2. **Cultural soft power:** By using traditional idioms, China projects its cultural identity and soft power on the international stage.
3. **Discursive control:** Phraseological units serve to frame discourse, limiting interpretation and reinforcing state narratives.

Conclusion. Phraseological units in Xi Jinping's speeches are more than stylistic embellishments; they are essential elements of political communication. They fulfill rhetorical, ideological, and cultural functions, reinforcing the authority of the speaker and the legitimacy of state policies. By drawing on the richness of Chinese linguistic and philosophical traditions, Xi crafts a political discourse that is uniquely Chinese in form and content, yet globally resonant in ambition.

Further studies may expand this research by comparing phraseological strategies across different political figures or analyzing audience reception to idiomatic expressions in various cultural contexts.

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