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# An Ecological Discourse Analysis to the Chinese Slogans during the Major Economic Stages since the Foundation of PRC

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## Abstract

Slogan has a sound mass base in China for thousands of years, functioning as guidelines for civic practice. Even today, Chinese slogans are often employed by the government to promote policies and socio-cultural values. This paper, adopting an ecolinguistic approach, explores the development of Chinese slogans during the four economic stages since the foundation of PRC (People's Republic of China) to find out how slogans influence the relationship between men, and man and the ecosystem. It is discovered that Chinese slogans in the recent decades have experienced great changes in terms of discourse type, the beneficial degree of discourse and the ecosophy they carry. They changed gradually from destructive discourse to harmonious discourse and they reflect the transition of Chinese ecological philosophy—from 'anthropocentrism', 'growthism', and 'classism' to 'harmonism'. It is hoped that this study can shed light on the eco-discourse analysis to policy language and will bring insight into its future creation.

**Keywords:** Chinese Slogans, Ecological Discourse Analysis, Destructive Discourse, Beneficial Discourse, Ecosophy

## Introduction

Slogans are a form of concise hortatory discourse that conveys ideas and values, often as prods or guides to action (Denton, 1980; Shankel, 1941). It is a world cultural phenomenon and is pervasively used in China (Han, 2008). The use of slogans in China can be dated back to about 3000 years ago, when *the Book of Changes* wrote "A gentleman should constantly strike to become strong just like the evolution of the universe; A gentleman should generously cultivate to become tolerant just like the earth bears everything on it. (天行健，君子以自强不息；地势坤，君子以厚德载物)" (The Book of Changes, 1046–771 BC). Carrying such humane and enlightened

values appreciated by the Chinese, this slogan has been influential ever since and has become inspiring mottos for many universities and individuals in China today.

Slogans in China, as an important form of institutional language, function as promotions for policies, values or actions advocated (or disapproved) by governments. They aim to encourage, appeal, persuade or engage people in certain actions according to the sociopolitical values of the state (Song and Gee, 2020). Slogans have a widespread base in China (Kim, 2011) which not only reflects the social and cultural outlook of China, but also affect people's life (Zhou & Xu, 2017, Han, 2008). Studies on Chinese slogans at different stages are important means for us to understand the changes of the public behaviors, values both socially and politically as well as the causes behind.

Ecolinguistics is the study of the impact of language on the life-sustaining relationships among humans, other organisms and the physical environment. It is normatively orientated towards preserving relationships which sustain life (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Discourse analysis is the primary concern of ecolinguistics. Halliday (2003:145) claims that language not only reflects reality but constructs it as well. Language influences our construe of the things and events in the world and the stories we live by. It influences our behavior and helps us to construct reality, society and the relationship between us and the rest of the world (Huang & Chen 2016).

Ecolinguistics contributes to CDA in that it not only expands the issues to be addressed but also offers new insights into how language constructs society (Stibbe, 2014). Eco-discourse analysis provides us a framework to inspect the preservative or destructive effect of human values on ecology. Huang & Zhao (2017) proposed that the main principle for Eco-discourse analysis should be in agreement with values such as, integration of man and the universe, human peace, social harmony and ecological preservation, beliefs that have been followed by us throughout human history. Ecolinguists should take social responsibilities to reveal the interrelationship between language and reality, explain the social influences certain discourses bring and thereby create harmonious social ecology by disclosing those destructive discourses and being supportive to the ecology-beneficial discourses. Stibbe (2014) suggests that eco-discourse studies, though differ in ways and perspectives of study, have five general characteristics in common. First, it focuses on influential discourses between men, and their interaction with the ecological system as ecolinguistics is normatively oriented towards the sustainable relationships of life. Second, it uncovers the world views or cultural regulations of in a particular context by interpreting discourse features. Next, the criteria for judging the world stem from a particular ecological philosophy. People or society that hold different values or ecosophies may view things or events differently which leads to different behaviors correspondingly. Moreover, the purpose of eco-discourse analysis is to reveal destructive discourses and seek beneficial discourse. It then naturally leads to the practical feature of eco-discourse analysis –to evoke the public attention to the effects that language generates on ecology and thus, brings consideration to policy making and educational development and helps reconstruction or improvement of discourses in future.

Discourse analysis involves lots of information behind the words, including the world view and philosophy held by the speaker. Analysis of ecosophy not only helps us preserve nature (Naess 1973, Stibbe 2015) but also helps us bring natural concern and environmental thinking into politics, hence building green political practices (Wang & Qu, 2008).

The talk of ecology and ecological civilization in China is closely related to the economic development (Huang & Chen 2018:4). In recent decades, ecological civilization has always been emphasized in the work reports of Chinese central government and governments of all levels. Researchers found that what was written in the government report would be reflected in their action (Shi, et al, 2019, Xu & Liu, 2017) and will navigate the public behaviors of Chinese people. The aggregate tone of the environmental protection discourses in the government report do lead to an increase in actual environmental investment (Shi, et al, 2019:7).

As is mentioned before, China has a long history of slogan application. It has been integrated as part of Chinese culture and is considered to be a crucial potential unifying force in Chinese society. The CPC (Communist Party of China) has made the slogan a leading form of political communication (Fitkunaga and Zhang, 2007; Liu, 2011; Lu, 1999). Slogans propagandize authoritative values and policy practices. They reveal the direction of social

development, people's attitudes toward the world, and the changes of social values and ecosophy. Therefore, in this paper, by analyzing the most influential slogans during the major economic stages since the foundation of PRC, I will elaborate on the changes of ideological values of the country as well as the ecosophy people take toward life and our ecological environment. The slogans quoted in this paper are from *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the central committee of the CPC, and some authoritative conferences, such as the National Congress. These slogans are considered to be the most authoritative and influential institutional discourses that guide people's thoughts and practices in real life.

### **Slogans during the major economic stages since the foundation of PRC**

Since the foundation of PRC, China has been through several major economic stages, namely, the recovery stage (1949-1957), turmoil stage (1958-1978), reform stage (1979-1992) and market economy stage (1992 till now). For each stage, there were widespread slogans, which functioned as statements of government policy, conveying expectations and suggestions of governments to the public. These slogans guide people's way of understanding the world, and to a very large extent, influence their practices in real life.

Stage of economic recovery (1949-1957)

Right after the foundation of PRC, domestic productivity was stagnant with deficient material resources and the regime was threatened by both internal and external forces. The top priority of the government, at this stage, was to stabilize the society and meanwhile recover economy as soon as possible. The most frequently shown slogans were:

1. Suppress the anti-revolutionists! (镇压反革命!) (1950)

The most widely spread economic slogans were

2. Machine is weapon, and factory is the battlefield! (机器就是武器, 工场就是战场!) (1950)

3 Love the country; sell the cotton, not leaving any for personal use! (爱国家, 卖棉花, 家中不留一点花!) 1951)

Slogans at this stage mainly concerned about economy and politics and expressed the mobilization with very aggressive tones. Either political or economic targets connoted in the slogans were viewed as 'war' or 'battle' that should be won with resolution. Words such as 'suppress', 'battlefield', and 'enemy' indicated that though the war (against Japanese and Kuomintang) was over, the country was still under a warlike environment. On the one hand, such expressions reflected the strong determination of the government to stabilize the regime and recover economy. On the other hand, these slogans were strongly aggressive, very harmful for social relationships. Moreover, slogans like 'Love the country; sell the cotton, not leaving any for personal use!' view personal/family interest as an impediment of the country's economic development. It was believed that individual interest and family benefit should be ignored or even sacrificed in front of the need of national prosperity. Individuals were not given full respect and regarded as part of the ecosystem, which in the long run, would demotivate their effort in constructing the nation. It also should be noticed that some important fields like education, culture, art, and social life were not given much attention, as few slogans concerned about them, an indication of an unbalanced social development mode at this stage.

Stage of turmoil (1958-1978)

During these two decades, the government made big mistakes in policy decisions which led to disastrous campaigns of 'the big leap' and Cultural Revolution. Slogans were posted everywhere, from public places to private houses. The 'big leap campaign' initiated by the central government aimed to satisfy the urgent need of economic recovery. However, it turned out to be a blind pursuit of unrealistic goals when policies were executed by the local governments. Slogans at this stage reflected the general desire to change the backward situation of the economy and culture but exaggerated the role of human's subjective initiative in economic development (Song & Gee, 2020:207). For example,

4. As bold you are, as much the land will yield! (人有多大胆，地有多大产!) (1958)
5. Five thousand- kilogram of rice production per acre! (亩产万斤!) (1958)
6. Surpass the United kingdom in three years and the United states in five years! (三年超英，五年赶美!) (1958)

On top of that, nature was put on the rival side of mankind. It was regarded as resources and at the same time, as obstacles that got in the way of human development. People were encouraged to play as heroes to conquer nature so as to obtain resources without limit for the quick growth of economic development. These potent slogans turned into the public actions of overexploitation of natural resources. Some of the most widely displayed slogans are:

7. Let the mountain bow to us and the river make way! (让山河低头，让河水让路!) (1958)
8. No fear for cold or hunger. Let the barren mountains realize their faults. (不怕冷，不怕饿，要叫大荒山向我们认错!) (1958)
9. Only green trees on the mountain are allowed. No permission for flood! (只准山上绿树遮满天，不准洪水再泛滥!) (1958)

The ten-year Cultural Revolution was a crazy period of national campaign. The government was determined to 'purify' the country by 'clearing' the potential risks/enemies. Class struggle became the guiding ideology and the whole country was mobilized to engage in it. Slogan reached its peak time and was posted everywhere. For example,

10. Down with the capitalists who are hidden in the Party! (打倒党内资本主义当权派!) (1967)
11. Smash all the monsters and demons! (横扫一切牛鬼蛇神!) (1968)
12. Class struggle is the guiding principle of our work! (以阶级斗争为纲!) (1958)

The slogans were filled with very strong hostile feelings. They mobilized a whole nation into an irrational campaign. This process caused restless feelings among people as they were worried about being identified as 'internal enemy' since there was no clear dividing line for it. As a result of the social turmoil, development of the country in all aspects came to a stop.

#### Stage of economic transformation (1979-1992)

After the chaos and economic setbacks of the Cultural Revolution, the CPC realized the catastrophic influence of internal struggle. Consequently, class struggle was called to stop and the work focus of the government was switched to the construction of socialist modernization. The shift of the ideology was represented in the slogans, such as,

13. You plant cotton, I spin. Farmers and workers are family members! (你种棉，我纺纱，咱们工农是一家。)
14. Agriculture ensures stabilization; industry guarantees flourishing; and commerce supports survival! (无农不稳，无工不富，无商不活。)(1991)

As the class struggle and revolutionary ideology faded, there arose the appeal for unification and emphasis was made on the connection and interdependence as the basis for the nation's prosperity. It was suggested that in the cycle of economic activities, agriculture is the first step, producing materials and industry follows it by making the materials into products. After that comes business activities that get profit by selling products. The importance of business to the economy was gradually recognized. Private business was no longer considered conflictual to the public benefit. Instead, it was believed to be a feasible solution to the problem of poverty.

In 1978, the central government adopted the Open-Door Policy for China, introducing a more market-based economy. Deng Xiaoping proposed

15. Let some people get rich first. (让一部分人先富起来。)(1978)

Under the reform and opening-up policy, individuals were encouraged to engage in economic activities. It was believed that only when people are materially better off can the nation get economically strong. Those who get rich first serve as a trigger as well as a model for the rest to strive for fortune. And the overall increase of living standard will naturally lead to a prosperous country. Chinese people then moved from political life to a new era of more realistic and material way of life.

Meanwhile, the central government also realized education as a crucial part of modernization construction. In 1977, College Entrance Examination was restarted across the nation for the selection and cultivation of talents for the country. And in 1985, the National Congress put a 'nine-year compulsory education' policy in law to ensure all the school-age children have equal opportunity for education. Across the nation, slogans encouraging children receiving the compulsory education were seen on all kinds of media, even on walls of both urban and rural areas:

16. The 'nine-year compulsory education' policy should be implemented fully. (全面实施义务教育。)(1985)  
17. No matter how poor (the family is), education cannot be ignored and children should not suffer. (再穷不能穷教育, 再苦不能苦孩子。)(1991)

Such slogans were widespread and deeply rooted as a Chinese belief ever since. Till today it is still widely accepted that education is the most important opportunity to change one's destiny. And the overall level of civic education decides the destiny of the country.

Environmental problems came along as economy boomed. It is the result of quick consumption of natural resources. To deal with problems such as deforestation, decrease of farmland, and desertization, the government advocated:

18. Plant trees for the benefit of our offspring! (大善大德, 植树造林, 福荫子孙。)(1991)  
19. Want to get rich? Plant more trees! (要想富, 多种树。)(1984)

Planting trees was considered as a solution to satisfy both personal and national needs—need to solve environmental problems and need for becoming better off.

The rising attention on education and environmental problems indicated a realization of the government that social development involves more than political and economic aspects. This is the start of the society developing in a more balanced and ecological mode.

Stage of fast development of market economy (since 1992)

By 1990s, the living standard of Chinese people has been greatly improved and the slogans undertook more responsibility in the promotion of social and ecological civilization. For example,

20. Everyone is responsible for environmental protection. (保护环境, 人人有责。)(1992)  
21. Love environment the way we love our life. (像爱护生命一样爱护环境。)(2002)

As is revealed in the above slogans, environmental issues are considered to be of vital importance and everyone is under the obligation to take protective measures. The public awareness of environmental protection keeps rising and in 2014, the National Congress proposed

22. We not only in need of mountains of treasures but also mountains and rivers (既要金山银山又要绿水青山)(2014)

To deliver a clear message that economic development should not be achieved at the cost of ecological environment. In 2005, when Xi Jinping was inspecting in Zhejiang, he put forward:

23. Mountains and rivers are mountains of treasures. (绿水青山就是金山银山。)(2005)

suggesting that the environment is equally important as wealth. This slogan was repeatedly proposed on many important conferences and occasions and later it was further improved to and

24. We would rather have mountains and rivers than mountains of treasures. (宁要绿水青山, 不要金山银山) (2017)

As the importance of environmental protection keeps increasing, the public attitude toward nature gradually changes. Natural resources are no longer taken for granted as means for man to get profit from but as essential existence in the world.

What is also improved is the relationship among people. After the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2003, the government proposed an ideology of 'scientific development' and 'building a moderately better off and harmonious society'. The most typical slogans are:

25. When one gets ill, the others help. Cooperative medical care guarantees our health. (一人有病众人帮, 合作医疗保健康。)(2015)

26. Construct a resource-saving, environmental-friendly society. (建设资源节约, 环境友好型社会。)(2007)

Words such as 'cooperation', 'co-construct' and 'friendly' were frequently shown on slogans, reflecting the general aspiration for a harmonious society. It also displays the government's ideology of sustainable development (Zhang, 2010).

## Discussion

Chinese slogan has experienced great changes with distinctive features marked by the historical stages. When viewed from an ecolinguistic perspective, these slogans changed not only in terms of discourse type but also varied in their beneficial degree to the ecology, demonstrating a continuum of discourse spectrum. Meanwhile, they also outlined the changes of social values in Chinese context through all these years, another continuum in terms of ecosophy. All of the changes took place as results of the changes in China's economy, political ideology and culture, etc. The following part will give an account of how slogans and social background interact with each other in China in the recent decades.

### Change of discourse type

According to Stibbe (2014), discourses may run along a spectrum in terms of their 'fit' with the ecosophy, with one end to be discourses that explicitly carry meanings against the ecosophy while the other end are discourses that resonate with the ecosophy. The former are destructive discourses that function similarly as the red traffic light. In contrast, discourses that align with the ecosophy are considered as beneficial discourses, ones that get a green light. Discourses that seem to be beneficial to the ecosophy but do not actively contribute to it, as if getting an amber light, are ambivalent discourses.

Chinese slogans, in the early years after the foundation of PRC, expressed very strong aggressiveness with words like 'eradicate', 'fight against', and 'enemy', etc. Even economic production was considered as a war-like activity and workers were called upon to work hard as if they were fighting in the battlefield. In addition, individual interest and welfare were reckoned as less important/unimportant and should be sacrificed for the country's development. These slogans, hurting the welfare of individuals, ignoring them as part of the whole, belong to the category of destructive discourse. Such slogans were reflections of the need of the CPC at that particular historical stage. After years of war with the Japanese and Kuomintang (KMT), the CPC had the urgent need of stabilizing the regime (by completely removing the influences of the previous forces), and establishing a new ideology (by erasing the old one). Slogans with formidable words worked well in inspiring the majority working class and the peasants (who had just been set free from the feudal landlords) to defend the new country and their new identity as independent individuals. However, it cannot be denied that such slogans caused intense social relationships and the value that personal benefits could be ignored was anthropologically incorrect.

The 'Big Leap Campaign' period is a time of blind pursuit for economic growth. To boast their productivity, the local governments kept revising their production plans and goals to unrealistic levels. Accordingly, slogans taking the greatest mission for propagandizing such idealistic ideology, (such as slogan 5, 6 and 7) were seen everywhere.

To inspire the public morale, slogans often described nature as inferior existence to be conquered by human. That is why there were always expressions like ‘let mountains...realize their faults’, ‘...allowed’, ‘Let River...bow to us’ in the slogans. These were typical destructive discourses that misled the public to the rival side of nature and encouraged unlimited exploitation of natural resources, resulting in catastrophic destruction of the ecological environment.

The next ten-year Cultural Revolution period was the darkest era in recent Chinese history as internal struggle became the working guideline of the whole country. Destructive words like ‘down with...’, ‘fight’, ‘severely critique’, and ‘smash’ were in the highest word frequency in slogans. Guided by the class struggle ideology, there emerged lots of clashes and conflicts across the country. Slogans in the ‘Big Leap Campaign’ and those during the Cultural Revolution period were extremely destructive as they caused unprecedented damage to the nation ecologically and socially.

After the Cultural Revolution, China started an economic reform. The blind pursuit of unrealistic production goals was prohibited and cooperation was called on among industries. As was analyzed in the slogans in the previous section, slogans mainly expressed the ideas of ‘taking care of both private and public benefits’ and interdependence between different walks of life. This is the turning point of slogans changing from destructive discourse to a beneficial style that promotes the sustainable relationships.

After China opened its door to international businesses, China’s economy boomed. Environmental problems kept occurring as natural resources were over exploited. Realizing the environmental issues such as pollution, desertion and greenhouse effect, etc, brought along by the quick marching of economic growth, Chinese government proposed slogans that aim to raise public awareness or offer alternatives for making fortune. However, slogans like ‘want to get rich? Plant more trees’, though encourage people to increase their revenue by planting trees rather than cutting them, still treats nature as a means of material provider, source to be served for human use. It is, as was described by Stibbe (2014) ambivalent discourse as half of it carries meaning that is friendly to ecology while the other half bears indication that is destructive to nature. At the early stage of ‘call for environmental protection’, slogans (such slogan 22, 23) seem to care about the use of natural resources, but give not feasible solutions or reconsider the general consumption, are ambivalent discourses as well.

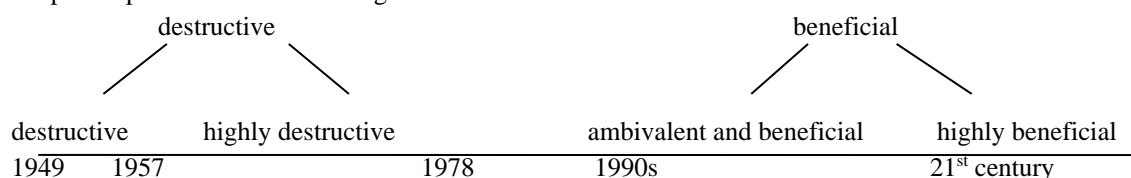
After the proposal of scientific development by the Chinese government at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ‘building a harmonious society’ became the national theme. Slogans at this stage (as were shown in the earlier section) were beneficial discourses which aim to promote harmonious relationships between men, other species and the ecological environment. What is worth noticing is that it is at this stage that exclamation marks became rare in the slogans, indicating that Chinese slogans no longer function as request that carry potent tones but suggestions and proposals that could be better received and more willingly followed by the public.

Change on the discourse spectrum

Discourses, though belonging to the same category (beneficial or destructive) may differ in their degrees of beneficial or damaging effects on the ecosystem. Instead of dividing them into three groups (beneficial, ambivalent, and destructive), it might be more reasonable to put them on a continuum (Huang, 2018).

When viewed from the eco-discourse approach, the slogans display a continuum with discourses standing on different points of the line according to their ‘fitting degree’ to the ecosophy.

Graph 1: Spectrum of Chinese slogans





As is shown in the above graph, generally, Chinese slogans after the foundation of PRC, has been developing from one end of the eco-discourse spectrum toward the other. From the birth of 'new China' to the end of Cultural Revolution, Chinese slogans were ecologically destructive but occupying different destructive positions on the eco-discourse spectrum. Slogans in the early years after the foundation of PRC were destructive discourses as they created warlike atmosphere to appeal resolution and hard work to help the government stabilize the regime and meanwhile mobilize people to take part in the 'battle' of economic activities. The 'Big Leap Campaign' period produced slogans that were even more ecologically damaging. Expressions like 'allow...', '... not permitted' and 'request...' treated nature as inferior existence to be conquered by human being. Similarly, slogans during the Cultural Revolution period were highly destructive as they formed two hostile parties—the working class and those 'anit-revolutionists'. Discourses like

30. Fighting against all monsters and devils' (打倒一切牛鬼蛇神) (1967)

31. '...punch him to the ground and tread with our feet!' (...打倒在地, 再踏上千万只脚) (1967)

caused extremely tense relationships in the society. The whole period was pervaded with panic and turbulence.

The economic transformation since the adoption of the opening-up policy serves as a turning point to the nature of slogans. Instead of mobilizing internal struggles, slogans at this stage encouraged cooperation and interdependence among industries as well as individuals.

With regard to the ecological environment, there was no more mobilization for fighting against nature, deforesting mountains and cutting rivers to suit the needs of mankind. On the contrary, environmental protection became a highlighted issue in government's agenda. To stop deforestation, government of all levels proposed 'Planting trees' as an alternative for farmers to make their fortune. However, natural resources (trees) were still considered as means to satisfy human need, which was critiqued for representing nature and other species as objects or resources of instrumental rather than intrinsic value (Stibbe, 2012a). Such slogans were defined as ambivalent discourses as they were partly eco-beneficial and partly eco-destructive. Ambivalent slogans were also found in the early 1990s with the purpose of protecting the environment that was increasingly polluted by industrialization. The typical ambivalent slogan (slogan 22), as was displayed earlier, though aims to raise public awareness of environmental preservation, offers no specific measure or suggestion for achieving the goal. Another example is slogan 23--'Use resources economically and decrease environmental pollution'. It seems to be ecologically constructive in motivating using less natural resources so as to reduce pollution, but actually fails to work actively toward this principle, as it does not tell the public 'how' and 'what to do'.

The 'scientific development' proposed by the Chinese government in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century put forward 'constructing a moderately developed country' based on 'harmonious relationships'. Later, 'harmonious relationships' became the core socialist value and was repeatedly shown in slogans.

After the 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2014, the stress on 'harmonious relationships' moved from human relations to relations between human and the environment. And the eco-beneficial degree kept growing as was demonstrated by the three slogans (Slogan 25, 26 and 27) concerning choices between wealth and the ecological environment. The rising degree of the beneficial discourses reflects the growing eco-awareness of the Chinese people.

#### Change of ecosophy in China

The term 'ecosophy' was proposed by Naess (1996) which means a philosophy of ecological harmony. It contains norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affair and offers a worldview against which discourses are judged. Hegel suggested that ideology is indispensable from language and language is a reflection of ideology. Slogans, as well, mirror the changes and development of social value and ecosophy in that particular context. Generally, Chinese ecosophy develops as if along a spectrum, from growthism, anthropocentric and classism toward highly harmonious.

Graph 2: Spectrum of Chinese ecosophy

Growthism, anthropocentrism, classism	cooperation	harmonism	highly harmonious
1949	1957	1978	1990s
			21 <sup>st</sup> century

In terms of the relationship between human and the environment, Chinese slogans demonstrate a process where the public ecological awareness grows from none to highly ecological. In the first few years after the birth of new China, the ecological environment was not much a concern of the country since the priority work of the government was on economic recovery and political activities. The 'Big Leap Campaign' drove the whole country for a blind pursuit of economic growth and displayed a period of 'extreme growthism' which considered economic growth as the foremost target for all social activities. Accordingly, numerous slogans motivated people to explore natural resources to satisfy human need, treating nature as inferior existence. This anthropocentric belief put human in the center of the world while other living organisms functioned as source of material and service for mankind. It led to tremendous damage of the natural environment. It was in the early 1990s when environmental issues came to the agenda of Chinese government, that the eco-friendly attitude was gradually shown in the slogans. Instead of being 'conqueror' and 'controller', people were encouraged to play the role of 'protector' to the environment. Gradually, as the ecological awareness kept rising, it became widely accepted that man and the nature should not be 'a major role and a weaker role' in the world, but 'equal existences' that live in a sustainable ecological system.

Slogans also reveal the change of social relationships. In the early years after the birth of new China, the warlike slogans served as a declaration of the government's resolution to eradicate the old national ideology and establish a new ideological system in which people would live as masters of the country. The social relations were tense as a lot of attention was paid to the fight against any force that may put the new power at risk. When the national focus was switched to economic construction in the late 1950s, there was a strong unification among people and industries. For nearly ten years, people all over the country were called on to join the 'Big Leap Campaign' and worked together for building socialist economy. However, in the Cultural Revolution, as the central government want strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, people were divided into classes. Those capitalists, 'anti-revolutionist' and 'right-winged' became targets of 'class struggle'. This 'classism' ideology intensified the social relations, bringing endless worries and panic to the public. It also caused catastrophic results to the national economy and other aspects of life. After the opening-up, people were encouraged to 'emancipate the mind and seek truth from facts (解放思想, 实事求是)', which marks the end of the old ideology and the start of a new one. The intensified atmosphere was eased as the notion of 'the whole nation is a family' was brought to mind. This is the time when people in China were called to create a harmonious relationship and a time when the relations between China and other countries were greatly improved. As a result, international cooperation increased to an unprecedented level. In 2004, the CPC proposed 'construct a socialist harmonious society' and it became the government's strategic task since then. 'Harmony' became the new social ideology. Workers, farmers and intellectuals are all considered as the primary pushing force for social and economic development. Developing needs from both developed areas and underdeveloped areas should be taken into account. The government also emphasized the importance of solving conflicts between different times, different places, and different interest groups. The common goal of the country now, is to build a society with a friendly relationship between humans and other humans and a harmonious coexistence between human and the ecological environment. This 'harmonious society' ideology makes the sustainable development possible.

## Conclusion

Slogan is a cultural phenomenon and is particularly pervasive in China. It plays such an important role in the way that perhaps few other countries have ever experienced. China has a long history (thousands of years) of slogans. Back to Qin Dynasty, slogans were adopted to declare the emperor's achievements and mobilize the public to participate in particular activities. Chinese slogans are poetic-short and brief with rhyming terminal sounds. They are easy to pronounce, catchy, and easy to remember and therefore always employed by rulers for unifying the public and spreading values. Slogans mirror the social changes. The analysis to Chinese slogans presents the politic, economic and other changes that take place during a certain period of time.

The ecolinguistic approach offers a new perspective to language study. Ecolinguistics analyses discourses by critiquing those encourage ecologically destructive behaviors and seeking out those encourage respect and care for the natural world (Stibbe, 2014: 117). In terms of slogan analysis, it examines how slogan, an important institutional language, influences the public behavior and therefore social relationships as well as the relationship between man and the environment.

There are four major economic stages since the foundation of PRC, namely, the recovery stage, stage of turmoil, stage of economic reform, and stage of fast development of market economy. Each stage produced slogans for political, economic or social purposes. Generally, the Chinese slogans developed along an eco-spectrum either in terms of discourse type, beneficial degree of discourse or ecosophy. They changed, as if along a discourse continuum (Huang, 2018), from extremely destructive discourses to ambivalent discourses and then beneficial discourses and later highly beneficial/ harmonious discourses. The ecosophy held by the Chinese developed from anthropocentric that was marked with 'growthism' and 'classism' to cooperation and 'coexistence' that supports the peaceful relationship between man and other species and later, to 'harmonism' that sustains the long-term development of the whole ecological environment.

Chinese slogans were marked with epochal features that convey important policies and ideologies of the government: warlike slogans in the recovery stage, grandiose slogans during the 'Big Leap Campaign' period, and feverish in the Cultural Revolution, etc. At the sight of a slogan one can easily recognize the stage when it was written (Han, 2010).

One thing that needs to be noticed is that discourse analysis should take the historical and cultural background into consideration (Huang & Zhao, 2017).

Take Chinese slogan for example, only when it is along with the political as well as economic and social background that we are able to understand the reasons of the birth of such slogans and thereby better understand the shaping influences these slogans bring to the behaviors of the people and the ecosophy held by them.

In the long run of human history, there were periods when man's survival and social development depends on the consumption of natural resources, either it to be hunting activities or farming on grasslands or industrialization that causes green house effect. There are periods and stages when damages were made to the ecological environment and other species and organisms were not respected as equal existence with men. These were the results of given situations, either it to be extremely poor living condition, or short of replaceable resources or lack of ecological awareness. Even today, there are societies that are by far economically underdeveloped and people there can hardly find shelter or food. To them, it is the urge of survival rather than ecological awareness that drives their everyday practice. Therefore, discourse analysis should undertake the responsibility to (a) raise ecological awareness, (b) share lessons and experiences (as countries and areas are not developing at the same pace), (c) not only reveal the shaping functions of language on the ecosystem so as to seek better alternatives for a more sustainable ecological environment, but, more importantly, work on more practical frameworks for countries or areas that are under different stages or situations.

This paper, by revealing the changes of discourse features along with social background, hopes to bring a comprehensive understanding of the development of the Chinese slogans and the eco-effects they brought to this country. It is also hoped that the eco-thoughts on slogans can shed light on the creation of policy language so that they may not only be able to achieve the mission of unifying the public but to guide public actions toward a more ecological and sustainable way. It is a win-win solution.

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