

# A Critical Discourse Analysis on The New York Times News Reports of Five Central Asian Countries

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**Abstract:** *By using Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse model and Halliday's systemic functional grammar as the theoretical basis for the framework, the researcher selects news reports and articles from the main stream media The New York Times on five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) from the beginning of 2012 to June 2024 as data source and builds a target corpus accordingly. By the use of corpus linguistics methods with discourse analysis approach, the researcher conducts a critical discourse analysis on the media reports of five Central Asian countries from three dimensions: description, interpretation and explanation. The findings of the study suggest that American's mainstream media focus primarily on geopolitical issues, energy storage, and national security, which are all critical to the U.S. foreign policy and strategic interests. Regarding the five Central Asian countries as an important region for balancing geopolitical power with China and Russia, the U.S. still positions itself in opposition to China and Russia, which suggests that the U.S. frames international relationships in terms of competition and rivalry, rather than cooperation and multilateralism. This can lead to an overlook of complexity and inter-connectivity of global issues, ultimately hindering the development of comprehensive and effective solutions to global issues.*

**Keywords:** *five Central Asian countries; corpus; discourse analysis; media reports*

## 1. Introduction

Central Asia refers to the central interior of Asia. The concept was first proposed by the German Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) in 1843<sup>[1]</sup>. The reach of the term "Central Asia" has traditionally been viewed differently by scholars. The range of what it encompasses has been defined in various ways.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are commonly accepted as the components of the "five Central Asian Countries". The five countries of Central Asia are the transportation hubs linking Asia and Europe, and have traditionally been a must-go places for eastward and westward travel and for southward and northward travel as well. The five Central Asian countries are also the places that are essential stops along the ancient Silk Road. After the end of Cold War, the geopolitical significance of the Central Asian countries as an important strategic buffer zone has become even more prominent<sup>[2]</sup>.

The definition of Central Asian Countries that we use in this article is also narrowed into five countries namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. These five countries are located at the heart of the Eurasian continent and hold significant geopolitical positions. Major powers including Russia, the European Union have all turned their attention to Central Asia and wish to engage in exchanges and cooperation with these nations in Central Asia. After the independence in the 1990s, these Central Asian countries have become United States' key external strategic targets. What exactly is the perspective and attitude of U.S. to the five Central Asian countries deserves further study. And there is a close relationship between national mainstream media and national policies. Mainstream media typically plays the role of disseminating national policies, guiding public opinion, and shaping social consensus. So we can elicit the answer to this question from news reports of the main stream media-The New York Times.

## 2. Theoretical Background

As one of the founders of critical discourse analysis as applied to sociolinguistics, Norman Fairclough(1992)<sup>[3]</sup>argues that “Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research framework dedicated to the relationship between language, power and ideology”. The multidimensional discourse analysis model that he proposes holds that language reveals the dialectical relationship between discourse and power and ideology. He argues that discourse should be simultaneously a language text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice.

However, discourse has been criticized for “the lack of sufficient, objective, and systematic linguistic evidence for the interpretation of the discourse”<sup>[4]</sup>.Stubbs (1997) thinks that Corpus-based research can make up for the lack of substantial empirical evidence in CDA<sup>[5]</sup>.The application of Corpus Linguistics (CL) to CDA research has long been practiced abroad. Domestic scholar Xu Jiajin claims that Corpus-based discourse research has at least two advantages: first, as a database, a corpus holds a large (and often representative) collection of certain types of discourse. The linguistic facts and discourse features found in them are more generalizable than those found in a small number of texts; second, corpus analysis methods have their own relatively mature linguistic feature extraction and statistical methods, which can help to discover and answer questions about the correlations and differences between discourse phenomena. And we can't deny that corpus-based discourse analysis also has some limitations, such as limiting the depiction of language to lexical items, analyzing and interpreting discourse phenomena in a more subjective manner, and favoring the study of formal features that can be easily extracted by computers, etc. However, Xu Jiajin confirms that the combination of corpus and discourse research has its own content and methodological rationale. They both focus on real language in use, and both corpus and discourse research involve not only linguistic data but also analytical tools<sup>[6]</sup>.

Professor Shi Xu redefines “discourse” and explains that discourse refers to the socialization practices of individuals or groups using language and other means in a global communication system, in a specific cultural and historical environment. Discourse, according to Shi Xu, consists of six elements including dialogical subject, speech, action, medium/space/time, purpose/effect, historical relations, and cultural relations, which are also known as “Six-in-One” discourse analysis framework that dialectically related. He argues that the fundamental reason International mainstream discourse analysis and communicative studies are not up to the challenge we face nowadays is that they adopt a Western-centered stance and lack a competitive sense of cultural pluralism. He points out that from a historical perspective, western discourse analysis is in a dichotomous thinking. The pitfalls of dichotomy lie in seeking the sword in a boat, being in charge of arbitrariness, and ignoring the dialectical relationship of things and the changing nature of things. This is not only unpractical in recognizing and guiding the practice of society, but also may lead to socio-cultural barriers and conflicts because of misinterpretation and misguidance<sup>[7]</sup>.

Systemic functional grammar is a form of grammatical description which is fundamental part of a social semiotic approach to language. The founder of systemic functional grammar, Michael Halliday holds that a language can be interpreted as a system of meanings accompanied by forms<sup>[8]</sup>.Systemic functional grammar can be integrated into the studies investigating language use in many different contexts including language policy planning, literature interpretations, media practices and so on. And news discourse is a primary subject of critical discourse studies nowadays. Scholars at home and abroad such as Caldas<sup>[9]</sup>,Qian Yufang<sup>[10]</sup>and others have provided new perspectives and research pathways by combining corpus linguistics methods with critical discourse analysis. In this research, by building a target corpus based on The New York Times news reports of five Central Asian countries, the researcher systematically examines the discourse features and perspectives of American media towards the five Central Asian countries.

## 3. Research Design

### 3.1 Research Question

What are discourse features of The New York Times's News Reports to five Central Asian countries?

### 3.2 Research Methods and Procedures

Assisted with the Dow Jones Reuters Business Information (Factiva) global news database, the researcher extracts all reports and commentary articles from The New York Times, the most influential American mainstream media, as data source. These reports and articles are featured with the names of the Central Asian countries appearing in titles. The time span is set over a period of 12 years from January 2012 to June 2024. The researcher follows screening criteria and conducts manual work in order to make sure that all the reports selected are closely relevant to the five Central Asian countries with no duplications exist. A total of 221 valid articles were obtained, of which 119 reports were on Kazakhstan, 35 on Kyrgyzstan, 33 on Uzbekistan, 26 on Tajikistan and 8 on Turkmenistan. With the assistance of AntConc 4.3.1w, the author builds a target corpus comprising the valid pieces of news reports from The New York Times with a total of 188,536 tokens. The author examines the high frequency words to the target corpus and extracts keyword list using the AmE06 Corpus as reference corpus (the AmE06 Corpus, a one-million-word corpus of published general written American English). With the help of analyzing collocations and contextual information to the keywords in the context (KWIC), the researcher facilitates the further use of discourse analysis in interpreting these recurring linguistic examples.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 High-frequency Words Analysis

The author conducts a search for top 55 high-frequency words to the target corpus as can be seen from table1. After removing the functional words, the top 130 high-frequency words are retained, and the 1st high-frequency word in the list is “Kazakhstan”, while the other four countries, “Uzbekistan”, “Kyrgyzstan”, “Tajikistan” and “Turkmenistan” are ranked the 10th, the 23rd, the 32nd, and the 122nd respectively. This demonstrates the keyness of The New York Times’ coverage of the Central Asian countries. And the media has a greater focus on Kazakhstan, suggesting that a relatively higher level of attention was paid to Kazakhstan than to the other four Central Asian countries.

Table1 Top 55 high-frequency words about the five Central Asian countries from The New York Times

| Type       | Rank | Freq | Range | NormFreq |
|------------|------|------|-------|----------|
| said       | 12   | 1393 | 1     | 7388.509 |
| kazakhstan | 21   | 1007 | 1     | 5341.155 |
| country    | 27   | 752  | 1     | 3988.628 |
| president  | 33   | 576  | 1     | 3055.119 |
| government | 39   | 528  | 1     | 2800.526 |
| new        | 44   | 454  | 1     | 2408.028 |
| people     | 45   | 442  | 1     | 2344.38  |
| russia     | 48   | 424  | 1     | 2248.907 |
| soviet     | 51   | 408  | 1     | 2164.043 |
| central    | 52   | 391  | 1     | 2073.874 |
| uzbekistan | 54   | 368  | 1     | 1951.882 |
| nazarbayev | 55   | 351  | 1     | 1861.713 |

### 4.2 Keyword Analysis

Keyword analysis examines words that are statistically significant or unusually common in a target corpus compared to a reference corpus, highlighting distinctive features of the text. Table2(screenshots from AntConc’s keyword tool) is a keyword list retrieved from target Corpus in comparison with reference corpus (the AmE06 Corpus). The keyword statistical measure used here is Log-Likelihood (4-term), and a p value of 0.05 is taken as the cut-off point. Table2 displays the result of top 50 keywords in target Corpus which highlight the theme and style of the reports’ discourse. These words are sorted from highest to lowest based on key values, with higher key values indicating greater significance.

Table 2 :Top 50 keywords from the target corpus

| Keyword Types 780/14253 Keyword Tokens 72546/188536 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 100 of 780 hits |              |      |          |          |           |           |                      |                  |  |
|---|--------------|------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|------------------|--|
|   | Type         | Rank | Freq_Tar | Freq_Ref | Range_Tar | Range_Ref | Keyness (Likelihood) | Keyness (Effect) |  |
| 1   | kazakhstan   | 1    | 1007     | 0        | 1         | 0         | 3742.772             | 0.011            |  |
| 2   | mr           | 2    | 1280     | 366      | 1         | 68        | 3138.301             | 0.013            |  |
| 3   | country      | 3    | 752      | 317      | 1         | 161       | 1601.799             | 0.008            |  |
| 4   | uzbekistan   | 4    | 368      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 1366.710             | 0.004            |  |
| 5   | nazarbayev   | 5    | 351      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 1303.548             | 0.004            |  |
| 6   | russia       | 6    | 424      | 62       | 1         | 21        | 1224.767             | 0.004            |  |
| 7   | soviet       | 7    | 408      | 55       | 1         | 23        | 1196.460             | 0.004            |  |
| 8   | kazakh       | 8    | 271      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 1006.346             | 0.003            |  |
| 9   | said         | 9    | 1393     | 2564     | 1         | 314       | 912.562              | 0.014            |  |
| 10  | central      | 10   | 391      | 138      | 1         | 89        | 891.730              | 0.004            |  |
| 11  | government   | 11   | 528      | 359      | 1         | 137       | 885.782              | 0.006            |  |
| 12  | kyrgyzstan   | 12   | 241      | 2        | 1         | 1         | 872.405              | 0.003            |  |
| 13  | russian      | 13   | 314      | 56       | 1         | 24        | 870.554              | 0.003            |  |
| 14  | president    | 14   | 576      | 485      | 1         | 136       | 841.099              | 0.006            |  |
| 15  | tokayev      | 15   | 225      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 835.480              | 0.002            |  |
| 16  | moscow       | 16   | 252      | 24       | 1         | 10        | 780.833              | 0.003            |  |
| 17  | almaty       | 17   | 196      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 727.771              | 0.002            |  |
| 18  | tajikistan   | 18   | 192      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 712.915              | 0.002            |  |
| 19  | former       | 19   | 342      | 188      | 1         | 122       | 644.566              | 0.004            |  |
| 20  | asia         | 20   | 230      | 45       | 1         | 28        | 624.221              | 0.002            |  |
| 21  | protests     | 21   | 192      | 13       | 1         | 12        | 620.462              | 0.002            |  |
| 22  | karimov      | 22   | 164      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 608.928              | 0.002            |  |
| 23  | putin        | 23   | 138      | 10       | 1         | 3         | 442.569              | 0.001            |  |
| 24  | capital      | 24   | 190      | 68       | 1         | 50        | 430.972              | 0.002            |  |
| 25  | unrest       | 25   | 125      | 5        | 1         | 5         | 423.412              | 0.001            |  |
| Keyword Types 780/14253 Keyword Tokens 72546/188536 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 100 of 780 hits |              |      |          |          |           |           |                      |                  |  |
|   | Type         | Rank | Freq_Tar | Freq_Ref | Range_Tar | Range_Ref | Keyness (Likelihood) | Keyness (Effect) |  |
| 26  | protesters   | 26   | 130      | 9        | 1         | 7         | 419.049              | 0.001            |  |
| 27  | uzbek        | 27   | 110      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 408.400              | 0.001            |  |
| 28  | in           | 28   | 5099     | 19923    | 1         | 500       | 406.705              | 0.048            |  |
| 29  | has          | 29   | 981      | 2350     | 1         | 411       | 403.638              | 0.010            |  |
| 30  | police       | 30   | 224      | 147      | 1         | 65        | 383.458              | 0.002            |  |
| 31  | bishkek      | 31   | 100      | 0        | 1         | 0         | 371.269              | 0.001            |  |
| 32  | china        | 32   | 178      | 79       | 1         | 36        | 370.610              | 0.002            |  |
| 33  | oil          | 33   | 218      | 147      | 1         | 58        | 367.293              | 0.002            |  |
| 34  | afghanistan  | 34   | 146      | 39       | 1         | 25        | 364.767              | 0.002            |  |
| 35  | security     | 35   | 272      | 261      | 1         | 90        | 359.990              | 0.003            |  |
| 36  | officials    | 36   | 208      | 135      | 1         | 71        | 358.334              | 0.002            |  |
| 37  | astana       | 37   | 92       | 0        | 1         | 0         | 341.564              | 0.001            |  |
| 38  | region       | 38   | 176      | 92       | 1         | 45        | 339.985              | 0.002            |  |
| 39  | islamic      | 39   | 159      | 67       | 1         | 21        | 338.372              | 0.002            |  |
| 40  | asian        | 40   | 134      | 39       | 1         | 20        | 326.107              | 0.001            |  |
| 41  | leader       | 41   | 169      | 91       | 1         | 54        | 321.727              | 0.002            |  |
| 42  | nursultan    | 42   | 82       | 0        | 1         | 0         | 304.434              | 0.001            |  |
| 43  | rights       | 43   | 196      | 153      | 1         | 64        | 301.219              | 0.002            |  |
| 44  | turkmenistan | 44   | 80       | 1        | 1         | 1         | 286.571              | 0.001            |  |
| 45  | kyrgyz       | 45   | 76       | 0        | 1         | 0         | 282.156              | 0.001            |  |
| 46  | afghan       | 46   | 90       | 9        | 1         | 4         | 276.877              | 0.001            |  |
| 47  | ukraine      | 47   | 96       | 15       | 1         | 4         | 273.592              | 0.001            |  |
| 48  | cosmo        | 48   | 71       | 0        | 1         | 0         | 263.592              | 0.001            |  |
| 49  | vladimir     | 49   | 75       | 2        | 1         | 2         | 260.572              | 0.001            |  |
| 50  | after        | 50   | 532      | 1166     | 1         | 402       | 260.268              | 0.006            |  |

In the list, the keywords "Kazakhstan," "Uzbekistan" "Kyrgyzstan" "Tajikistan" and "Turkmenistan" are ranked the 1st, the 4th, the 12th, the 18th, and the 44th respectively (all within the top 50) suggesting the thematic nature of The New York Times' reports of the five Central Asian countries.

The researcher classifies the keywords generated in Table 2 into three categories: geopolitics (including the names of national leaders), energy, and security. The first category-geopolitics-consists of 28 words including "kazakhstan" "country" "Uzbekistan" "Nazarbayev" "Russia" "Soviet" "government" "Kyrgyzstan" "president" "Tokayev" "Moscow" "Almaty" "Tajikistan" "Asia" "Karimov" "Putin" "capital" "capital" "Bishkek" "China" "Afghanistan" "region" "leader" "Nursultan" "Turkmenistan" "Ukraine" "Vladimir". In this category, in addition to the geographical names and leaders of the five Central Asian countries, there are also countries such as China, Russia, and Afghanistan, which suggests that the reports is not limited to the Central Asian region itself but also encompasses neighboring and geopolitically significant countries. The presence of these additional countries in the data suggests a broader regional context within which the Central Asian countries are being discussed.

### 4.3 KWIC Analysis

A concordance analysis is one of the most effective techniques which allows such close examination<sup>[11]</sup>. It can elicit semantic preference or discourse prosody and therefore, help discover naturalized meanings (perspectives) hidden behind language<sup>[12]</sup>. In antconc4.3.1, KWIC analysis functions in the same way as concordance analysis does. And for facilitating discourse analysis into further use, the researcher interprets and analyzes the specific context to keywords-the recurring linguistic examples with sentences and expressions in which these keywords(KWIC) occur to understand how these categorized keywords are contextualized.

#### 4.3.1 Wordcloud Analysis of KWIC

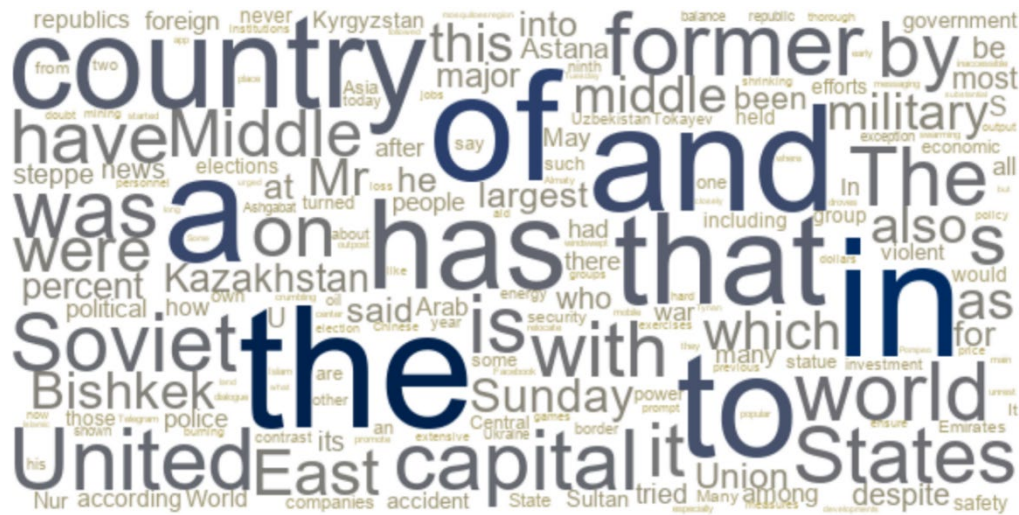


Figure 1: Wordcloud chart: wordcloud of the results generated by KWIC

Wordcloud tool visualizes the results generated by KWIC, File, Cluster, N-Gram, Collocate, Word, and Keyword tools in the form of a ‘word cloud’. As can be seen from the wordcloud chart, besides aesthetical significance, the wordcloud displays the morphology of KWIC and visualizes ‘themed’ image mask of keywords in the context and sized according to word frequency.see Figure 1.

This chart works by placing keywords in the context in a word cloud and determining their position and size based on their relevance to other words and frequency of occurrence. If a word occurs frequently in the text and has high relevance to other words, it will be enlarged and highlighted in the center of the chart, emphasizing its important role in the text.

As can be seen from the chart, the enlarged and highlighted non-functional words are “countries” “former” “united” “capital” “Soviet” “middle” “states” “world” representing those words appear more frequently in the context to the keywords from the target corpus. This shows that, relatively speaking, The New York Times focus more on particularly in the Eastern region of Central Asia. The results also suggest a thematic discussion around the capitals and geopolitical landscape of these former states of the soviet union. Overall, the word cloud highlights key topics related to the past and present dynamics among these nations and their roles in the global context.

#### 4.3.2 KWIC Analysis to Five Central Asian Countries

Table 3 Examples of KWIC to “kazakhstan” “Uzbekistan” “Kyrgyzstan” “Tajikistan” “Turkmenistan”

| Serial number | Index Example  |
|---------------|--|
| 1             | has a border with China and hosts a Russian military air base. <i>Kyrgyzstan's</i> first two presidents after independence                                   |
| 2             | <i>Uzbekistan</i> , the crossroads of Central Asia, is important to Russia, China and the United States. Some <i>Uzbeks</i> have                             |
| 3             | But guided by the hand of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the first and, so far, only president of this former Soviet Republic, <i>Kazakhstan</i> is trying for a dran |
| 4             | <i>Tajikistan</i> is a very poor former Soviet state. Its nearly inaccessible roads have hurt development.   |
| 5             | The results give Mr. Berdymukhammedov another five-year term as president of <i>Turkmenistan</i> , an oil- and gas-rich former Soviet republic borderi       |

Amidst those keywords in the context, 1007 hits for “Kazakhstan”, 368 for “Uzbekistan”, 241 for

“Kyrgyzstan”, 192 for “Tajikistan” and 80 for “Turkmenistan” are extracted from the target corpus respectively. Based on the results, the researcher extracts above five lines with keywords in the context as examples shown in table 3. The five Central Asian countries, located in the heart of Central Asia, are neighbors to China, Russia, Afghanistan, and other nations. The retrieval results of KWIC indicate that the United States' coverage on the Central Asian countries is not singular or isolated, but rather integrated with the neighboring countries. This suggests that the U.S. pays significant attention to the connections and interactions between the Central Asian countries and their neighbors, especially with China and Russia.

Moreover, modifiers to keywords in context can clearly help shape and refine the meaning of language. The limiting modifiers to the five Central Asian countries such as “only president of this former Soviet Republic”, “is important to Russia and China and the United States”, “former Soviet state” and “former soviet republic” all stress the countries' unique historical ties to the Soviet Union and their geopolitical significance in the present day. They emphasize the influence of past events and the ongoing power dynamics. Those lines may imply that represented by the mainstream media, the U.S. still often positions itself in opposition to China and Russia by contrasting the connections of the Central Asian countries with China and Russia against those with the United States.

#### 4.3.3 KWIC Analysis to Energy-“oil”

Table 4 examples of KWIC to “oil”

| Serial number | Index Example  |
|---------------|--|
| 1             | Kazakhstan, an oil producer with major investments from Chevron and Exxon, has been a bastion of stability for most of the post-Soviet period.           |
| 2             | To diversify its economy away from oil, the Kazakh government has been financing herders who crossbreed one-humped and two-humped camel                  |
| 3             | the election was set to confirm Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as the successor to Nursultan Nazarbayev, who ran the oil-rich former Soviet republic for a        |
| 4             | said Kairat Kelimbetov, governor of the financial center. “The price of oil is \$50 a barrel, and we don't think it is ever coming back. Now is the time |
| 5             | The theme of the fair, which closes on Sunday, is “Future Energy.” That may sound like a stab at humor given that oil, gas and metals are the lifeblood  |

The second category to KWIC-energy-includes “oil” with 218 results, most of which are related with “Kazakhstan” (with certain amount of results to Turkmenistan). Based on the results, the researcher extracts above five lines with keywords in the context as examples shown in table 4. Keyword “oil” in the context highlights the significant concern of the U.S. media regarding the energy stance, energy policy, and energy development of the five Central Asian countries. To “oil”, modifiers “major” “-rich” emphasize the current state of oil reserves in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, suggesting that American media holds a positive and affirmative attitude towards the energy reserves of these two countries. However, the fifth example “a stab at humor given that oil, gas and metals are lifeblood of the country” shows that the media holds a negative attitude towards the singular energy framework of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. This suggests that the media acknowledges the importance of the oil reserves in these countries, while it also criticizes or expresses concerns about Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan's over-reliance on a single energy resource which potentially implies these nations' lack of energy diversities and their economic vulnerabilities.

#### 4.3.4 KWIC Analysis to Security-“protest” and “security”

The third category to KWIC-security-includes “protest” and “security” with 192 and 274 hits, among which 155 and 141 hits are related to “Kazakhstan”, 24 and 32 hits are related to “Kyrgyzstan”, 3 and 65 hits are related to “Uzbekistan”, 0 and 28 hits are for “Tajikistan” and 0 and 6 hits are related to “Turkmenistan”. Most of the above results are reports between year 2020 and 2022 in which the five Central Asian countries have found themselves in difficult situations. A significant number of reports focused on events including the failed oil price reform in Kazakhstan at the beginning of 2022 (which led to a months-long movement against oil price increases), localized tension in Uzbekistan, border confrontations between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the economic crisis in Turkmenistan. This shows the ongoing attention of American media to issues of national security and stability in the Central Asian countries.

#### 4.4 News Source Analysis

It is widely acknowledged that Journalism relies heavily on reported speech for most events, with journalists tending to provide information about current affairs by quoting someone, a publication, or another news agency. Word “said” appears frequently in both the high-frequency words and the

keyword list, ranking the 12th and the 9th respectively. This tells the newspaper's practice of citing and paraphrasing official statements, as well as directly or indirectly quoting leaders, government officials, and experts from various countries. This approach serves to enhance the objectivity and authoritativeness of the news reports to the media.

## 5. Conclusion

The researcher selects all reports and commentary articles from American mainstream media The New York Times from January 2012 to June 2024 as data source. By building a target corpus based on The New York Times news reports to five Central Asian countries, combining corpus linguistics methods with critical discourse analysis, the researcher systematically examines the American mainstream media discourse and focus towards the five Central Asian countries.

The American mainstream media mainly focus on key topics related to the past and present dynamics among these nations and their roles in the global context. And the news reports particularly concentrate on geopolitical issues, energy storage, and national security in these nations. This emphasis shows that the U.S. is closely monitoring and is interested in the political landscape, energy dynamics, and security issues to the Central Asian countries, which are all critical to the U.S. foreign policy and strategic interests. The media holds a positive and affirming attitude towards the current energy reserves of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, while simultaneously expresses a negative attitude to the countries' singular energy structures. Such a mixed stance reflects its concerns to these countries about their over-reliance on a single energy source, which could pose risks on their economic diversities and long-term sustainability. This could also demonstrate that the U.S. media maintains a skeptical attitude towards energy future in these countries. What could not be ignored is that the above focuses of attention on specific aspects could potentially overlook other important features of these nations. Moreover, represented by the mainstream media, the United States, regarding the five Central Asian countries as an important region for balancing geopolitical power with China and Russia, still positions itself in opposition to China and Russia often, which fully reflects the typical binary opposition thinking of Western culture (represented by the United States). This mindset often leads to a framing of international relationships in terms of competition and rivalry, rather than cooperation and multilateralism as domestic scholar Shi Xu argues previously. By focusing on a simplistic dichotomy between opposing stands, this binary perspective can overlook the complexity and inter-connectivity of global issues, ultimately hindering the development of comprehensive and effective solutions to global issues<sup>[13]</sup>.

## Acknowledgement

1) This article is an interim result of the 2022 Xinjiang University Philosophy and Social Sciences in-school cultivation project "American news media's attitude towards the five Central Asian countries from their reports on the five Central Asian countries" (project number: 22CPY131).

2) This article is an interim result of the 2023 Xinjiang University graduate education and teaching reform project "Practical Research on the Assessment and Cultivation of Graduate Students' Critical Thinking Ability - Taking the Level 6 Writing of Non-English Major Graduate Students as a Case Study" (approved project number: XJDX2024YJG57).

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