

A Comparative Study on the Identity Construction of New Energy Enterprises Between China and the United States Based on Discourse Historical Approach

-- A Case Study of BYD and Tesla Social Responsibility Reports

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Abstract. Up against climate change, the identity construction and corporate social responsibility of new energy enterprises are of great strategic significance to corporate reputation and competitiveness. Taking the corporate social responsibility reports of BYD and Tesla from 2018 to 2022 as the corpus, this study takes the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as a theoretical framework to analyze the identity construction of Chinese and American new energy enterprises and the social context behind them. It is found that BYD and Tesla both have constructed the corporate identities of “smart car provider”, “faithful environmentalist”, and “zealous globalist” based on social contexts of China and America. Due to the differences between the two cultures, BYD and Tesla have won a good social reputation by building the corporate identities of “social-oriented contributor” and “self-oriented contributor” respectively. This study not only provides a reference for the in-depth study of corporate identity discourse construction, but also guides Chinese and foreign enterprises to construct good corporate identity through corporate social responsibility reports.

Keywords: Corporate Identity; Discourse Historical Approach; Corporate Social Responsibility Report.

1. Introduction

Global climate change is an imminent realistic crisis since the 21st century and energy transformation has become an important measure for the world to cope with climate change. Up against the energy transformation, carbon reduction has been a global consensus, bringing opportunities and challenges to the development of new energy enterprises. Besides, the identity construction of new energy enterprises is not only the objective need of corporate development, but also the foundation of building corporate external image, which represents the strength, reputation, and corporate image (Sun, 2021).

The concept of identity was first put forward as “identitie” in Latin in 1570, which means “the same quality or condition in material, composition, nature, and attribute, that is, absolute or essential sameness and oneness” (Benwell, 2006). Tajfel (1981) believed that identity is a part of individual self-cognition, which stems from individual cognition of the value and emotional meaning of their social group and its members. In recent years, with the discursive turn of identity research, the concept of identity has transformed from essentialism into social constructivism. Emphasizing the social attribute of identity, essentialism holds that identity is a relatively stable status or role played by individuals or groups in certain social relations (Stryker, 1987), such as age, gender, family background, or position. Social constructivism holds that identity is constructed dynamically, actively, and online through discourse in communication, instead of being individual and unchangeable (Chen, 2014).

Scholars believe that institutions also have their identity (Coupland & Brown, 2004). As a category of institutional identity, corporate identity construction not only affects the identity and loyalty of internal stakeholders to the enterprise, but also influences the corporate competitive advantage and profitability (Vella & Melewar, 2008). From the perspective of social constructivism, corporate identity construction also has a mutual relationship with discourse, which can be shaped, managed, and manipulated by discourse (Wu & Zhang, 2019). Therefore, many scholars in recent years have

tried to use discourses to analyze corporate identity construction, with relevant discussions mainly focusing on the retail industry, financial industry, and energy industry. Taking the corporate social responsibility report of Wal-Mart as an example, Miao and Li (2021) discussed the discourse construction of corporate ecological identity from three dimensions, including lexical grammatical approaches, re-contextualization of discourse practice, and interaction between enterprise and ecology. Feng and Wu (2019) compared the anti-construction effect of fan discourses in Sina official blogs of the state-owned Bank of China and joint-stock China Merchants Bank on corporate identity from the perspective of interactive sociolinguistics, so as to help enterprises achieve marketing goals. Ma and Wang (2022) analyzed the discourse strategy of identity construction of Chinese energy enterprises according to the pyramid model of corporate social responsibility. Besides, some scholars have analyzed the differences in corporate identity construction from a cross-cultural perspective. Cheng (2021) used cross-cultural theory to explain the similarities and differences in identity discourse strategies between Chinese and American bank corporate websites, aiming at improving the corporate ability to construct identity discourse in external publicity. Based on the literature review, from the perspective of research methods, the current academic research on corporate identity construction mainly involves the content, form, rhetoric, and style of corporate discourse. Although many scholars have realized the importance of social and historical context to corporate identity construction, few pay attention to the influence of this variable in corporate identity construction. From the perspective of research objects, the discourse research about “new energy” is insufficient and the research on the identity construction of new energy enterprises is even less.

The discourse historical approach was formed by Austrian critical discourse analyst Ruth Wodak et al. during the analysis of anti-Semitic stereotypes in the 1990s, which is one of the main approaches of critical discourse analysis aiming to objectively reveal the complex relationship among language, power, and ideology. In addition to the analysis of discourse texts such as language features, strategies, genres, styles, and specific intertextuality, it requires researchers to emphasize the investigation of the historical context of language production (Zhao, 2009). Thus, it is very convincing in analyzing political discourse. Fairclough (2013) holds that identity is one of the three functions of discourse. In other words, discourse not only represents and reproduces society, but also constructs society. From the perspective of constructivism, discourse, and context are the keys to identity construction. On the one hand, the process of the communicator’s identity selection through discourse is purposeful and dynamic. On the other hand, context is a way to understand the reasons why communicators choose certain linguistic means to construct identity (Li, 2022). In recent years, scholars at home and abroad have used DHA to analyze corporate identity construction. At present, according to the research data used, the empirical research of corporate identity construction based on this method is mainly divided into two categories. One is based on corporate annual reports. For example, Chang (2020) selected the annual reports of Chinese and American automobile companies to compare the similarities and differences between Chinese and American corporate identities; Zhang (2021) used the annual reports of Huawei and Alibaba as the corpus to analyze the differences in the construction of corporate identity between the two multinational enterprises in the first and second stages of internationalization. The other is based on corporate social responsibility reports as research data. For example, Li (2022) took Starbucks’ corporate social responsibility report as a corpus to study the differences in corporate identity constructed for different stakeholders; Huo (2022) analyzed the multiple identities constructed by Huawei by studying its social responsibility report.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the behavior in that enterprises promote social and environmental benefits in their business activities (McWilliams, Donald, & Patrick, 2006) and undertake the responsibility for employees, consumers, communities, and other stakeholders. Nowadays, as people pay more and more attention to the negative impact of business activities on society and the environment, the social responsibility reports issued by large enterprises show a trend of standardization. As for new energy enterprises, improving the information disclosure of CSR reports is not only a vital publicity means for them to gain recognition and favor from stakeholders in the road traffic electrification that is sweeping the world, but also an objective requirement for

enterprises to achieve sustainable development and promote the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

Taking CSR reports of BYD and Tesla as a corpus based on the above background and research, this paper using corpus tools compares the identity construction of Chinese and American new energy enterprises according to the DHA of Reisigl (2016). The following two questions will be answered:

(1) What are the similarities and differences between the corporate identities constructed in BYD and Tesla's CSR reports?

(2) What are the social and historical reasons behind the construction of their corporate identities?

2. Method

2.1 Corpora of BYD's and Tesla's CSR Reports

Firstly, this study obtains the English version of Social Responsibility Reports from BYD's and Tesla's official websites from 2018 to 2022 respectively. During the data collection, we did not find a CSR report from Tesla's official website except its Impact Report. After comparing the contents of Tesla's Impact Report with the disclosure required by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), we determine that its Impact Report has the same function as Social Responsibility Report, which can be regarded as CSR Report. Then, we convert each PDF file to plain text and manually delete any non-text elements such as images, tables, and metadata information that will not be included in subsequent language analysis. As shown in Table 1, the subcorpus of BYD has a total of 86119 tokens and that of Tesla 99211 tokens.

2.2 Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis

Table 1. Size of Each CSR Report

BYD	Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
	Number of word tokens	15244	12706	14118	20602	23449	86119
Tesla	Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
	Number of word tokens	10256	12102	23728	32644	20481	99211

Table 2. Keywords in BYD Subcorpus and Tesla Subcorpus

NO	BYD Subcorpus			Tesla Subcorpus		
	Keywords	Freq	Keyness	Keywords	Freq	Keyness
1	BYD	1656	2559.476	Tesla	1253	1571.117
2	quality	398	390.462	our	1891	1187.749
3	management	663	388.522	we	1350	442.871
4	system	398	205.561	emissions	558	402.058
5	regulations	172	199.198	U.S.	240	288.335
6	rail	129	187.638	data	297	226.535
7	green	153	186.227	GHG	181	226.024
8	intellectual	123	170.884	Gigafactory	173	216.028
9	Shenzhen	111	170.462	miles	148	184.792
10	customer	192	165.032	model	250	183.031
11	company	394	161.275	cobalt	146	164.171
12	Sky	105	161.244	ICE	134	157.033
13	responsibility	171	153.140	supply	321	133.374
14	procurement	135	139.172	impact	209	123.833
15	property	114	134.908	manufacturing	281	118.148

This study combines quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze corporate identity construction. Quantitative analysis provides an aerial view of identity presence (Van de Mierop, 2007), which presents an important clue and basis for further analysis of identity construction. Qualitative analysis is imperative to understand how identity is dynamically constructed through discourse. In this paper, the corpus software AntConc 4.2.0 is used to process the two sub-corpora to

generate quantitative data. On this basis, qualitative analysis is conducted. First, we will explain the similarities and differences between the two corpora by keywords (see Table 2). Then, collocation analysis is conducted on “BYD” and “Tesla” to generate high-frequency phrases. Finally, relevant linguistic materials are collected through concordance to analyze the construction of corporate identity revealed by corpus in connection with social and historical context.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Macro-Level Analysis of Main Topics

Table 3. Category of Keywords in BYD Subcorpus and Tesla Subcorpus

Category	BYD	Tesla
Product related	quality, rail, Sky	miles, model, ICE, data
Environment related	green	emissions, GHG, impact
Organization related	management, procurement, system, regulations, intellectual property	U.S., Gigafactory, cobalt, supply, manufacturing
Humanistic care related	Shenzhen, customer, responsibility,	/

In business discourse, the characteristics and themes can be studied by keywords, which are important factors to distinguish the meaning of text and understand the author’s intention (Hu, 2015). Comparing the two corpora and analyzing keywords can reveal the differences in vocabulary style and discourse structure (Baker, 2004). Therefore, we divide the keywords of BYD and Tesla in Table 2 into four groups as shown in Table 3. Generally speaking, their discourse distributions in Social Responsibility Reports are roughly the same, focusing on product, environment, and corporate organization, which is determined by the genre of Social Responsibility Reports. CSR report is a relatively broad concept and some companies also call it a “sustainable development report” or “corporate citizenship report”. To unify the specifications, the company now compiles them according to the *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines* issued by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (Yang, Gao & Wang, 2019). In addition to the corporate introduction, corporate governance, and social responsibility, this regulation requires CSR reports to disclose the environmental impact of their activities, products, and services. According to the keyword frequency table, some contents of BYD keywords are related to “humanistic care”, which shows that BYD tends to build a corporate identity full of humanistic care in CSR reports as seen in (1). However, Tesla has no relevant keywords, which does not mean it does not pay attention to humanistic care. Through the index analysis of Tesla’s other keywords, we find that Tesla tends to show its concern for human rights and employees by expounding the humanized working conditions and the legitimacy of the labor force in its industrial chain. For example, Tesla stressed that they will ensure the safety and humane treatment of workers in the industrial chain as seen in (2). Even if they use only a small amount of cobalt, it will ensure that no child labor is exploited as seen in (3). This difference in narrative style may be partly due to different laws and regulations set by the two governments. For example, the U.S. Department of the Interior (2019) clarified the *American Mineral Security Act*, which requires the Small Business Administration (SBA) to supervise the industrial chains of “critical minerals” in the automobile and energy industries, so as to reduce external dependence and improve the safety of mineral resources and supply chains. The Chinese government has not enacted similar regulations, which can explain why Tesla described it in more detail in its battery metal supply chain.

(1) BYD and the Shenzhen middle school authorities have jointly set up the Shenzhen Yadi School to provide education to employees' children (BYD, 2018).

(2) Tesla is committed to making working conditions in our supply chain safe and humane, ensuring that workers are treated with respect and dignity and that manufacturing processes are environmentally responsible (Tesla, 2020).

(3) Because Tesla recognizes the higher risks of human rights issues within cobalt supply chains, particularly for child labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (“DRC”), we have made a significant effort to establish processes to remove these risks from our supply chain (Tesla, 2019).

3.2 Corporate Identity Construction Analysis through Micro-Level Analysis of Linguistic Devices

In the CSR report, “BYD” and “Tesla” are nominations of the company itself, appearing 1656 and 1253 times respectively. After searching the collocates located to the right of node words “BYD” and “Tesla” in their subcorpora respectively, verbs and nouns from the first 40 collocates are manually screened out, with the results shown in Table 4. Then, the concordance of verb and noun collocates is collected to generate the following identity summary:

Table 4. Most Frequent Verb and Noun Collocates of “BYD” and “Tesla”

Categories	BYD	Tesla
Verb collocates	has, is, will, volunteers, was, won, launched, continues, had, adheres, provides, advocates	is, has, will, does, believes, offers, was, continues, provided, designed, estimated
Noun collocates	auto, company, supplier, code, automobiles, charity, energy, employees, models, group, supplier, customers, corporate	vehicles, employees, model, data products, energy, supplier, battery, factories, stock, board, ecosystem

3.2.1 Similar Identity Construction

3.2.1.1 Smart Car Provider

With the continuously improving cruising range of new energy vehicles, “mileage anxiety” has been initially solved and intelligence has become users’ new expectation for new energy vehicles. In the CSR report, BYD and Tesla both built the corporate identity of “smart car provider”.

(4) As for electronics, BYD is the world's leading provider of intelligent product solutions, with its electronics business covering consumer electronics hardware like smart phones, notebooks and tablets (BYD, 2018).

(5) Our commitment to safety is why all Tesla vehicles built since October 2016 come with a suite of external cameras, additional sensors, and onboard computing (Tesla, 2019).

The oil crisis in the 1970s forced the automobile industry to develop energy-saving cars with low fuel consumption. In 2015, facing the threat of climate change, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) formally put forward the *Paris Agreement*, which set global carbon emission targets. Governments of various countries participated in global climate governance and made due policy adjustments. The European Union has issued a timetable for banning the sale of fuel vehicles. In the 13th Five-Year Plan, the State Council of China indicated that it would continue to reduce and exempt purchase taxes and invest heavily to support the research and development of core technologies of new energy vehicles. The U.S. government provided the electric vehicle industry with a government loan of 4.5 billion U.S. dollars and an annual subsidy of 10 million U.S. dollars for the Battery 500 Consortium. With the support of national policies, new energy vehicle enterprises have broken through the bottleneck of production capacity. Traditional fuel vehicles with internal combustion engines as power sources are changing to new energy vehicles. In recent years, thanks to the wide application of intelligent technology and the increasing acceptance of digital interactive technology by customers, intelligence has become the new core competitiveness of the new energy automobile industry. Since the release of DiLink, an intelligent network connection system, in 2018, BYD has established cooperative relations with NVIDIA, Huawei, Baidu, and other enterprises to accelerate its intelligent layout. Similarly, Tesla developed its autonomous driving technology Autopilot in 2014. It can be seen from (4) and (5) that both BYD and Tesla have established the identity of “smart car provider” in CSR reports, so as to show the competitive advantage of their products to stakeholders.

3.2.1.2 Faithful Environmentalist

Up against the sustainable and high-quality development policy, consumers' awareness of environmental protection has increased and they are willing to pay for environmental protection and green products (He, Chen & Zeng, 2022). CSR report is an important public discourse of listed companies, which has the dual attributes of objective presentation and promotion persuasion (Feng & Guo, 2015). In the tide of coping with global climate change, the sales volume of new energy vehicles represented by Tesla and BYD continued to be dominant. In the CSR report, BYD and Tesla have shaped their corporate identities as faithful environmentalists by explaining the concept of recycling packaging materials and energy-saving technologies respectively as seen in (6) and (7).

(6) BYD advocates the development of a circular economy, actively explores ways to improve the resource utilization and reduces the total use of packaging materials (BYD, 2022).

(7) Tesla is building capacity to recycle manufacturing scrap and end of life batteries in order to close the loop on battery raw materials (Tesla, 2021).

It is worth mentioning that BYD and Tesla also adopted mitigation strategies when building their corporate identities as "faithful environmentalists". Although new energy vehicles have no exhaust emissions in the use stage, with the expansion of production capacity, their carbon emissions are significantly higher than those of ordinary fuel vehicles and they also involve pollution emissions such as harmful gases. In May 2022, accused of pollution due to nosebleeds of 100 children around the factory in Yuhua District, Changsha, BYD was later included in the key supervision by Changsha Environmental Bureau. After searching for the word "environmental" in BYD 2022 subcorpus, we did not find the concordance of its disclosure of this incident. Instead, we found that BYD claimed in the 2022 CSR report that it strictly conformed to China's environmental protection law as seen in (8). In April and August 2021, the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE) constantly released two reports, "*TESLA Pollution Under the Low Carbon Halo: Electric Vehicle Investigative Report 1*" and "*TESLA Pollution Under the Low Carbon Halo: Electric Vehicle Investigative Report 2*", pointing out the environmental problems of its supply chain in China. It was not until September 30, 2021, that Tesla made a non-public response to IPE and promised to make rectifications. After searching for the phrase "supply chain" in Tesla 2021 subcorpus, we found that its specific corrective measures for environmental violations were not involved in the relevant concordances as seen in (9). Therefore, both BYD and Tesla have adopted the mitigation strategy to maintain their identity construction as "faithful environmentalists".

(8) During the reporting period, BYD has strictly abided by the Law of the People's Republic of China on Environmental Protection (BYD, 2022).

(9) We engaged with several third-party service providers allowing us to continually monitor our supply chain for emerging issues that may affect our suppliers (Tesla, 2021).

3.2.1.3 Zealous Globalist

Globalization means that various factors of production, such as capital, technology, and labor, can flow around the world to seek the best investment market to maximize profits. New energy vehicle enterprises especially rely on the support of technology and capital in their development, so it is critical for them to expand the global industrial chain. In the CSR report, BYD and Tesla both constructed the corporate identity of "zealous globalist".

(10) BYD is accelerating its internationalization strategy and lighting up more cities with ecological civilization around the world (BYD, 2022).

(11) Tesla believes that the success of our company and society depends on enabling diverse businesses to share and grow in the global market (Tesla, 2018).

Affected by multiple crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, escalation of geopolitical conflicts, and rising inflationary pressures in 2020, to prevent the "industrial hollowing out" within countries, they have changed their industrial layout from "prioritizing efficiency" to ensuring safety and preventing risks. Meanwhile, the global industrial chain has begun to accelerate its adjustment in regionalization, localization, and digitalization (Zhang & Dai, 2022). However, BYD has always

adhered to the strategy of going global in its industrial chain. According to statistics, it has made comprehensive strategic deployment in six continents except Antarctica as the world's largest manufacturer and processor of new energy vehicles. Similarly, Tesla also pays great attention to boosting its penetration rate in the global market. Even under the unfavorable Sino-US trade friction, Tesla insisted on investing in its super factory in Shanghai, China. Currently, the factory has not only solved the production capacity that has plagued Tesla for a long time, but also become its largest automobile export center in the world. In May 2023, Musk said proudly when he arrived in China to visit this super factory that "without Chinese support, there would be no Tesla today." In the CSR report, BYD and Tesla established the identity of "zealous globalists" by expounding their globalization strategy as seen in (10) and (11), so as to explore overseas markets, obtain strategic resources, and enhance global competitiveness.

3.2.2 Different Identity Construction

In the present complex international environment with industrial transformation, corporate social responsibility has become integral to the core corporate competitiveness as one of the important symbols for consumers and partners to measure the products, prices, quality, and services of enterprises, which is helpful for enterprises to build brands and word of mouth.

In the CSR report, BYD built its corporate identity as a "social-oriented contributor" by reviewing its participation in charitable and public welfare activities as well as its contribution to the country in science and technology.

(12) During the outbreak of the pandemic in 2021, BYD volunteers actively assisted the Group in anti-pandemic activities (BYD, 2021).

(13) BYD's solutions are groundbreaking in China's medium and small capacity of rail transit and offer "Chinese wisdom" to the mitigation of traffic congestion in cities worldwide (BYD, 2019).

Tesla has built its corporate identity as a "self-oriented contributor" by demonstrating its thoughtful service to customers, equal treatment for female engineers, and data sharing with external organizations.

(14) Tesla is a one-stop shop for taking our customers off the grid by covering a large variety of their needs (Tesla, 2020).

(15) To promote gender diversity in STEM, since 2018, Tesla has encouraged girls to see engineering as a means to pursue their goals by participating in Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (Tesla, 2021).

(16) Tesla is also sharing data and statistics collected by our vehicles with select regulatory bodies and external research organizations (Tesla, 2021).

BYD and Tesla have constructed the identity of "contributors" in different ways to enhance the identity of stakeholders. Such a difference in identity construction mainly comes from the cultural differences between the two countries. Hofstede and Bond (1984) believe that the relationship between people is relatively loose in an individualistic society where people tend to care about themselves. In a collectivist society, people pay attention to maintaining the relationship between internal groups and advocate that individuals must obey their groups.

As a country featuring collectivist culture, China pays more attention to collective interests. In this social context, the way for enterprises to fulfill their social responsibilities is to give back to society and make practical contributions. Thus, BYD adheres to the concept of "science and technology charity", and actively participates in charity and public welfare undertakings to return to society. When COVID-19 broke out in 2021, faced with a serious shortage of medical protective materials, BYD quickly deployed resources, assisted in the production of masks and disinfectants, and contributed to the global fight against the epidemic as seen in (12). In addition, BYD has built a straddle monorail "Sky Rail" in its Shenzhen headquarters park, which contributes to solving the global urban traffic congestion and the "last mile". In the CSR report, BYD particularly emphasized that the development of its technology belongs to "Chinese wisdom" as seen in (13). In China, enterprises that strive to give back to society with funds and help regional development with

technology tend to be more loved and supported by the people, so BYD prefers to build the corporate identity of a “social-oriented contributor” in the CSR report.

As an individualistic country, the United States more focuses on personal interests. In fulfilling its responsibilities, Tesla provides considerate treatment to customers and employees and establishes a good relationship of mutual trust with the public while realizing its green and sustainable development. As for customers, Tesla offers a one-stop service to avoid their worries as seen in (14). As for employees, Tesla encourages female employees to participate in high-tech manufacturing and contribute to promoting gender equality as seen in (15). As for the public, Tesla takes the initiative to present vehicle data to vehicle safety research organizations to eliminate public doubts and misunderstandings about electric vehicles as seen in (17). In the United States, enterprises that attach importance to maintaining good relations with stakeholders are more likely to be favored by the capital market. Therefore, Tesla tends to build the corporate identity of “self-oriented contributor” in the CSR report.

4. Conclusion

According to critical discourse analysis, discourse constructs social identity and pays attention to problem-oriented discourse practice, which emphasizes that discourse analysis must be placed within the framework of domain, habitus, and capital (Zotzmann & O’Regan, 2016). Reisiigl (2016) put forward a discourse historical approach guided by social philosophy to analyze positive self-representation and other negative representations in discourse, so as to reveal the discourse construction of inner and outer groups, clarify the attitude tendency and true intention in discourse, and provide a unique research perspective for critical discourse analysis. Analyzing the identity construction in corporate CSR reports from aspects of linguistic expression form, discourse strategy, and theme, this paper can fully reflect the relationship among discourse, discourse identity construction, and ideology.

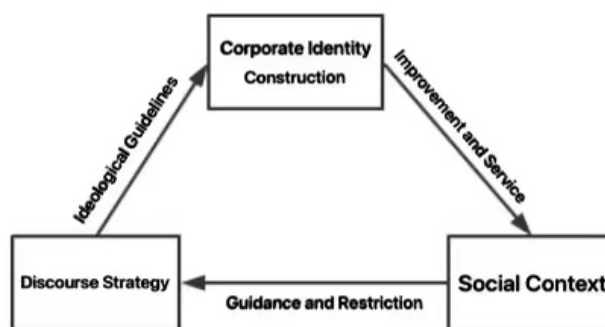


Figure 1. Discourse Strategy—Corporate Identity Construction—Social Context

Therefore, based on revising and integrating the original theory, this paper proposes an interactive framework of “discourse strategy—corporate identity construction—social context” to show their dynamic interactions (see Figure 1). According to Figure 1, the choice of corporate discourse strategies is guided and restricted by social context, where ideological policies and strategies are followed to build their identities. On the contrary, corporate identity construction can also serve the social context and strengthen the existing social ideology and rights relations.

With the help of AntConc, this paper analyzes the similarities and differences of identity construction in social responsibility reports of Chinese and American new energy enterprises under the theoretical framework of the discourse historical approach. The results show that both BYD and Tesla have constructed the corporate identity of “smart car provider”, “faithful environmentalist”, and “zealous globalist” by recognizing the real social context. Moreover, they all use mitigation strategies to maintain the positive identity construction of “faithful environmentalists”, from which we can realize the hidden corporate capitalism behind their discourse. As for this point, we need to reflect on it from a more neutral and objective perspective. If the whole society pays more attention

to the authenticity of information disclosure in corporate CSR reports, enterprises will be more aware of their crucial role in environmental protection and treat environmental problems in their supply chains with a more responsible attitude. In addition, due to the cultural differences, BYD and Tesla have established the corporate identities of “social-oriented contributor” and “self-oriented contributor” respectively, so as to enhance stakeholders’ sense of identity within their nations.

This study not only realizes the combination of DHA and identity construction by establishing an interactive framework of “discourse strategy—corporate identity construction—social context”, but also provides an effective reference for Chinese and foreign enterprises to construct good corporate identity through CSR reports. However, the following can be further improved. Firstly, the corpus is comparatively small and lacks a diachronic perspective on identity construction in different periods. Secondly, this paper chooses BYD and Tesla as the research objects because of their typicality. However, the new energy industry also includes smart grid, photovoltaic, and wind energy industries, so more corporate types can be included in the future.

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