When Science Communication Meets Politics: A Corpus-assisted Discourse Study of the Congressional Hearing on TikTok

Abstract:

This study incorporates text mining into critical discourse analysis to give a corpus-assisted discourse study of the Congressional hearing on TikTok. Topic modeling reveals two main concerns: TikTok's ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its digital management practices. Co-occurrence network analysis shows Republicans prioritized political matters, whereas Democrats focused on technical and managerial issues. Manual analysis finds that Chew's responses show the preference for denying strategies, though tactics varied by question types. This explains U.S. media's criticism of Shouzi Chew's uncooperative attitude and underscores the increasing intertwinement of science communication and politics in Congressional hearings.

Keywords: congressional hearing, TikTok, blame-avoiding, critical discourse analysis, corpus-assisted discourse study

1. Introduction

Science communication serves as a crucial bridge between complex scientific knowledge and public understanding, enabling citizens to make informed decisions about health, technology, and environmental issues. Effective science communication helps combat misinformation, builds trust in scientific institutions, and promotes evidence-based decision-making at both personal and policy levels (Davies, 2021). It plays a vital role in democratic participation by empowering citizens to engage meaningfully in public debates about scientific issues and make informed voting decisions (Metag et al., 2023; Moernaut et al., 2022). In an era of rapid technological advancement and global challenges, understanding how to communicate science effectively has become more important than ever for fostering an informed, engaged, and scientifically literate society (Suldovsky & Akin, 2023).

In government and policymaking contexts, science communication has become even more complicated due to the influence of politics in these contexts (Faehnrich & Ruser , 2019). Science communication is essential in tackling controversial and urgent issues like climate change and genetically modified organisms by setting political agendas to highlight critical scientific matters as well as to mobilize public support to influence necessary policy and funding decisions (Mahl et al., 2020). However, science communication may also undergo politicization where stakeholders use science and technology as a tool to achieve their particular goal, undermining the credibility of science perceived by the public (Capano et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the relationship between science communication and politics is vital for ensuring that science communication effectively informs and enhances public policy, ultimately contributing to a well-informed and progressive society (Dudo & Besley, 2016).

Congressional hearings represent a critical intersection of science communication and

policymaking. As a vital part of the legislative process for policymakers to gather information in the Western context (GovInfo, 2024), it is a place where scientific information is translated into legislative action, serving as unique institutional discourse events where science communication shapes policy outcomes on crucial scientific issues like public health (Carlin & Remmel, 2022), environmental protection (Fisher et al., 2012), and technological innovation (Bonnicksen, 2000). The way scientific information is discursively presented, questioned, and debated in these settings not only has immediate consequences for legislation but also reflects and shapes broader societal attitudes toward science and technology (Lynch, 2009).

In this era, science communication is increasingly politicized, with governments leveraging it to assert dominance in critical technologies as part of strategic competition. This dynamic plays a central role in shaping contemporary international relations, contributing to geopolitical tensions, market exclusions, and a range of bans, as exemplified by the ongoing U.S.-China technological competition (Segal, 2019; Yan et al., 2024). This study gives a critical examination of the Congressional hearing of TikTok and aims to achieve four objectives: (1) to underline the topics of the questions raised; (2) to reveal the influence of politics on the choice of topics; (3) to explore the blame-avoiding strategies employed in the Congressional hearing; (4) to demonstrate benefits of text mining in critical discourse analysis.

2. Previous studies on Congressional hearing: An overview

Congressional hearings have been extensively examined in different disciplines, including political science (Burstein & Hirsh, 2007; Oleszek et al., 2015), sociology (Allahyari, 1997; Mahatmya & Gring-Pemble, 2014; Yoo, 2008), and communication studies (Asen & Gent, 2019; Mando, 2016). However, some researchers have analyzed Congressional hearings from a linguistic perspective, focusing on the discourse used to uncover complex patterns (Giglioni, 2019, 2020; Liu and Lu, 2024). Their work examines how discourse functions, how power is exercised through language, how different actors utilize linguistic resources to achieve their goals, and how language choices can challenge or reinforce existing social and political structures (Subtirelu, 2013).

Some studies approach Congressional hearings from the perspective of conversation analysis (Baffy, 2020; Okada, 2019). For example, Okada (2019) gave a conversation analysis of Takata Corporation's performance during the 2014 U.S. Congressional hearings on defective airbags to understand negative media portrayals of Takata's attitude. The study found that Takata's inability to manage committee members' aggressive stances led to negative evaluations, unlike Toyota's successful emotion management in a similar situation. Baffy (2020) examined overlapping and latching talk during the Congressional hearing on June 13, 2017 with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, revealing how perceptions of interruption can influence assessments of political figures beyond the immediate context, raising potential gender biases in interpreting similar conversational behaviors. Besides conversation analysis, Liu and

Lu (2024) took a pragmatic approach and analyzed the blame-avoiding strategies used by Mark Zuckerberg during two Congressional hearings about the Facebook-Cambridge Analytical Scandal.

Some studies approach Congressional hearings from a critical perspective. For instance, Giglioni (2020) applied critical genre analysis to analyzing witnesses' opening statements, illuminating how institutional actors construct ethos-based public identities and how political communication is mediated through established generic conventions. Some other studies adopt a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to Congressional hearings, which focuses on how language is used to construct, maintain, and challenge power dynamics, ideologies, and institutional authority within this specific political setting (Kadkhodaee & Ghasemi Tari, 2019; Perna et al., 2019; Saghaye-Biria, 2012). Saghaye-Biria (2012), following Van Dijk (1997), gave a critical discourse analysis of the reproduction of racism and Islamophobia against Muslim Americans in Congress and identified competing discourses: one framing Muslim radicalization as a community problem and another criticizing this framing as unfairly targeting Muslims. Subtirelu (2013) gave a critical examination of the representation of language minorities in Congressional hearings and found that supporters and opponents of language policies often reproduced the "one language, one nation" ideology, using consistent language patterns that aligned with broader sociological concepts. Perna et al. (2019) gave a critical analysis of the hearings on the Higher Education Act. They focused on interactions between legislators and 22 academic witnesses, and found that academic contributions were often limited and framed to align with legislators' existing views, suggesting that legislators amplify or mitigate testimony based on the alignment with their policy goals.

Nevertheless, only a few studies addressed science communication on Congressional hearings and most of these studies were conducted in the field of political science, with the topics on environmental issues (Tzoumis, 2013), biotechnology (Sheingate, 2006), and technological corporate misbehavior (Epstein & Medzini, 2022). Few studies go beyond the national boundaries to examine issues of geopolitical significances (Balkan-Sahin, 2020; Kadkhodaee & Ghasemi Tari, 2019). There is little information about the dynamics between language, politics and science communication in Congressional hearings. Besides, most of previous studies used to rely on either quantitative content analysis or qualitative discourse analysis. Few studies attempt to incorporate computational or corpus linguistic methods into their analysis to present a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses in their studies. A notable exception is Subtirelu (2013), which combined CDA with corpus linguistics (CL) to analyze ideological differences between supporters and opponents, allowing for a detailed analysis across a large dataset. This study proposes to incorporate text mining into critical discourse studies to give a corpus-assisted discourse study of TikTok's Congressional hearing.

3. Corpus-assisted discourse studies

The benefits of using corpora in discourse analysis have been widely discussed in the last two decades (Baker, 2006). Leech (1992) has pointed out that the corpus-based methodology has the benefits commonly ascribed to "the scientific method", such as falsifiability, completeness, simplicity, strength, and objectivity (Rayson, 2008). This addresses the weaknesses of CDA, which has been frequently challenged for its representativeness, selectivity, partiality, prejudice and voice (Widdowson, 1995, 2004). Mautner (2009) argues that CDA and CL can "cooperate fruitfully and with mutual gain, building on a shared interest in how language 'works' in social rather than merely structural gains" (p. 32). O'Halloran and Coffin (2004) also recommend that large reference corpora are crucial for safeguarding against over- and under-interpretation. This has contributed to a growing number of studies using corpora in (critical) discourse analysis in the last two decades (Friginal & Hardy, 2021; Mautner, 2022).

In their comprehensive review of previous studies which combined CDA and CL, Baker et al. (2008) noted that previous research often favored one approach over the other, leading to methodological limitations, and argued for a "synergy" between the two disciplines based on the assumption that a balanced integration of CDA's theoretical frameworks and CL's methodological tools would produce more robust research outcomes. This aligns with the interest of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), which emphasize the "balanced" combination of computational corpus analysis with qualitative discourse analysis (Partington, 2004). With CADS, an analyst needs to move back and forth between the findings generated by corpus analytic tools and the context (Haarman & Lombardo, 2009; Morley & Bayley, 2009), so it permits the researcher to "shift between quality and quantity", thus preserving "both depth and breadth of analysis" (Morley & Bayley, 2009, p. 32). Since its very beginning, CADS has shown a strong interest in media and political discourses and addressed a range of topics, such as immigrants (Baker et al., 2008), the Iraq war (Morley & Bayley, 2009), LGBT (Baker, 2014), language ideology (Vessey, 2013), and climate change (Liu and Huang, 2024).

Although these studies have generated illuminating insights in revealing the role of discourse in social processes, they used to rely on traditional corpus linguistic methods, such as collocates, frequencies, part-of-speech, clusters and keyness (Baker, 2006). The recent development in text mining and computational linguistics, however, has introduced some new and innovative methods to corpus analysis, such as topic modelling, sentiment analysis, and even large language models (LLMs) (Bednarek et al., 2020; Poole, 2022). How to incorporate these new methods into (critical) discourse studies has emerged as a top agenda for CADS, and future CADS research might focus on developing more sophisticated tools for integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis, expanding applications to new domains and languages, addressing methodological challenges in big data analysis, and enhancing cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analytical capabilities (Chen & Wang, 2023; Liu, 2024; Liu and Huang, Forthcoming; Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016).

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection and corpus building

This study focuses on the Congressional hearing held by the House Energy and Commerce Committee for Shouzi Chew, the CEO of TikTok, on March 23rd, 2023. Congressional hearings are conducted by committees in the US Congress to collect and analyze information in the early stages of policy making (Carr, 2006). It is a crucial Congressional activity offering rich qualitative data that provides deep insights into political practices and policy preferences (Alphonso, 2010). The Congressional hearing on TikTok represents a significant intersection of technology regulation, national security concerns, and public discourse in contemporary digital governance.

As this study focuses on how Chew employed blame-avoiding strategies in response to committee members, it focuses specifically on the dialogic nature of the questioning in the hearing, characterized by 5-minute question-answer sequences. It allows for a detailed two-part discursive analysis of the interaction with different topics and blame-avoiding strategies. However, other parts of the hearing, e.g., opening statements, can provide valuable background information for a better understanding of the hearing. The March 2024 hearing of TikTok CEO Shouzi Chew before the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee underscored the tensions between technological innovation, national security, and geopolitics, particularly in the context of U.S.-China relations (Potipiroon, 2024). It served as a key moment in the ongoing discussions about regulating social media platforms and the role of foreign-owned technology companies in the digital age, and generated widespread public and media attention (Shepardson & Ayyub, 2023; Thorbecke, 2023).

The transcripts of this hearing were collected from the Congress official website (https://www.congress.gov/event/118th-congress/house-event/115519/text) and then divided into two parts: Questions and Answers. The whole corpus consists of 51,745 tokens, 37,850 tokens for Questions and 13,895 tokens for Answers.

4.2 Analytic methods and procedure

The analysis began with text-mining to extract topics from Congressional hearing questions using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) in Python. LDA enables analysis at two levels: the macro-level of collective issue definitions (extracted topics) and the micro-level of policy framing (words within topics) (Nowlin, 2016). The analysis focused solely on nouns, excluding other parts of speech, as this approach typically yields more semantically coherent topics in spoken text analysis (Martin & Johnson, 2015). Context-specific stopwords related to Congressional hearings (e.g., *chairman*, *gentleman*) were removed. The optimal number of topics was determined using perplexity and coherence scores. Topics and their top ten words were then categorized into dimensions through iterative reading of the source material.

Since all Congressional committees consist of members from both Republican and Democratic parties, it is of great interest to examine whether questioners from two parties are concerned about different topics and themes. Therefore, the text mining tool

KH Coder is used to give a co-occurrence network analysis of the questions from different parties to see how their concerns vary with different parties (Higuchi, 2016, 2017; Liu, 2024).

The study proceeded to analyze Chew's responses by examining his blame-avoiding strategies across different topics. The analysis relied on a modified analytic framework of blame-avoiding strategies (Liu and Lu, 2024) (see Table 1). The framework consists of four primary macro-strategies and their respective micro-strategies (i.e., tactics), as in the following:

- **Accepting** strategies involve acknowledging the blame through either (1) *apology* or (2) *quick acknowledgement*.
- **Denying** strategies encompass four distinct approaches: (1) rejecting the action entirely (*act-denial*), (2) claiming lack of control (*control-denial*), (3) disputing intentionality (*intention-denial*), or (4) contesting assumed purposes (*goal-denial*).
- **Downplaying** strategies aim to minimize one's role in controversial events through three tactics: (1) *changing the subject* to more favorable topics, (2) *claiming ignorance* by citing legal or privacy constraints, or (4) *restricting information* by providing partial or distracting responses.
- **Shifting** strategies involve reframing reality through five tactics: (1) *blaming other agents*, (2) *blaming victims*, (3) *citing similar problems in peer groups or predecessors*, (4) *distributing responsibility within the institution*, or (5) *recasting negative actions as positive ones*.

We started with manual coding of these strategies for each question-answer exchange, analyzing them in relation to the topics previously identified through topic modeling. This approach allowed for a systematic examination of how Chew's defensive strategies varied across different question topics.

Table 1. Analytic framework of blame-avoiding strategies

Macro-strategies	**Tactics**	**Definition**
Accepting	apology	Make preemptive apology
	quick acknowledgement	Quickly acknowledge the question
Denying	act-denial	Reject doing something
	control-denial	Claim the blame be an accident and beyond the control
	intent-denial	Claim not mean to do something
	goal-denial	Claim not do something for bad purposes
Downplaying	restrict information	Provide partial or distracting information
	change the subject	Divert focus from bad topics to good ones
	claim ignorance	Refer to unfortunate lack of relevant information
Shifting	blame the victim	Deconstruct victimhood to scapegoat victims
	blame predecessors or similar groups	Expand the scope of bad actors to normalize and mitigate bad actions

shift inside an institution	Shift individuals' responsibility within their belonged social group
blame the other agent(s)	Highlight other agents' faults to shift responsibility
reverse	Transfer a blameworthy outcome to a good deed

5. Findings

5.1 Top modelling analysis of Questions

Analysis of perplexity and coherence scores (see Figures 1 and 2) suggests that the optimal number of topics in the corpus of Questions should be nine, because it can achieve an optimal balance between capturing distinct themes and maintaining internal topic coherence while avoiding overfitting.

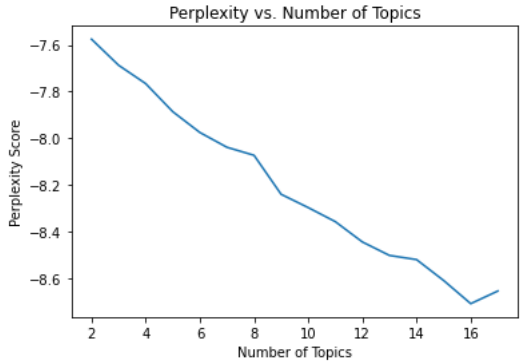

Figure 1. Perplexity score

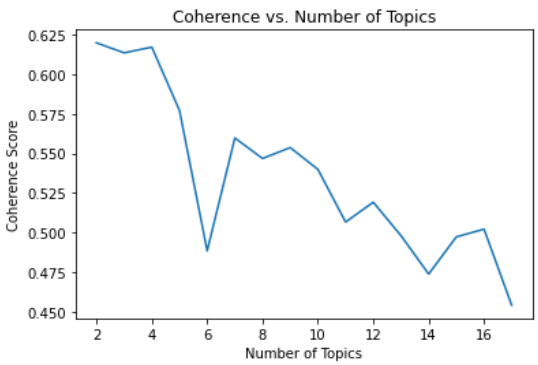

Figure 2. Coherence score

Table 1 shows the nine topics and their representative tokens. A close reading of those representative tokens finds that the nine topics can be divided into seven dimensions. These dimensions represent the primary areas of scrutiny during the Congressional examination of TikTok's operations and relationships.

The most significant concerns focus on Chinese influence, manifesting in two major dimensions: (1) CCP; and (2) ByteDance. The CCP dimension, which emerged from Topics 1 and 2 with a combined weight of 26.75%, dominated the discourse with its focus on TikTok's relationship with the Chinese Communist Party. This dimension encompassed concerns about data privacy, national security implications, and potential government oversight. The ByteDance dimension was formed by Topics 3 and 8 (19.92% combined), which addressed the complex relationship between TikTok and its parent company ByteDance. This dimension consists of questions about data access patterns, corporate governance, and the implications of ByteDance's influence over TikTok's operations, reflecting the committee's concerns about indirect Chinese control through corporate structures.

The next cluster of the committee's concerns focused on **platform security and data protection mechanisms**, comprising three distinct dimensions: (1) Project Texas; (2)

Privacy; (3) Code management. Project Texas (Topic 4, 11.94%) centered on TikTok's data localization efforts and U.S. protection initiatives. The Privacy dimension (Topic 5, 11.56%) addressed broader concerns about data collection practices, user information protection, and the handling of sensitive data such as health information. Complementing these was the Code Management dimension (Topic 6, 11.32%), which delved into the technical aspects of data access, code administration, and third-party sharing protocols, reflecting committee members' interest in the platform's technical infrastructure and security measures.

The final cluster addressed **content-related concerns** through two dimensions: (1) **Content management**; and (2) **Content moderation**. The Content management dimension (Topic 7, 11.06%) focused on the platform's handling of misinformation and its algorithmic content delivery systems, particularly examining how these systems might impact user well-being. The Content moderation dimension (Topic 9, 7.44%) explored content screening practices, harmful content removal procedures, and drew comparisons between TikTok's moderation approaches and those of its Chinese counterpart Douyin. Together, these dimensions reflected the committee's interest in how TikTok manages and controls its content ecosystem.

This comprehensive analysis reveals that the committee's scrutiny primarily concentrated on two broad areas: China-related issues, particularly through the CCP and ByteDance dimensions, and platform management practices, encompassing data protection, privacy, and content control measures (Table 2). The distribution of topic weights suggests that while Chinese influence remained the paramount concern, significant attention was also paid to TikTok's operational practices and their implications for user safety and national security.

Table 2. Topics and dimensions with distribution of weight

Rank	Words and Relevance	Dimension
Topic 1 (14.25%)	*data* (0.046), *TikTok* (0.034), *party* (0.017), *users* (0.017), *access* (0.017), *bytedance* (0.015), *privacy* (0.011), *children* (0.010), *information* (0.010), *china* (0.009)	CCP
Topic 2 (12.50%)	*bytedance* (0.026), *tiktok* (0.025), *data* (0.020), *party* (0.019), *company* (0.017), *government* (0.014), *committee* (0.013), *security* (0.011), *share* (0.010), *content* (0.009)	CCP
Topic 3 (12.29%)	*tiktok* (0.042), *users* (0.021), *information* (0.021), *bytedance* (0.015), *company* (0.014), *content* (0.014), *media* (0.010), *example* (0.008), *data* (0.008), *party* (0.007)	ByteDance
Topic 4 (11.94%)	*tiktok* (0.031), *data* (0.023), *bytedance* (0.021), *content* (0.018), *children* (0.015), *project* (0.013), *texas* (0.010), *company* (0.009), *government* (0.008), *concerns* (0.008)	Project Texas
Topic 5 (11.56%)	*bytedance* (0.029), *tiktok* (0.024), *data* (0.019), *children* (0.015), *information* (0.013), *privacy* (0.012), *companies* (0.011), *company* (0.010), *party* (0.010), *health* (0.009)	Privacy

Topic 6 (11.32%)	*data* (0.041), *tiktok* (0.021), *people* (0.014), *access* (0.012), *code* (0.012), *company* (0.011), *information* (0.011), *party* (0.010), *users* (0.008), *user* (0.008)	Code management
Topic 7 (11.06%)	*tiktok* (0.033), *misinformation* (0.021), *data* (0.017), *content* (0.015), *platform* (0.010), *platforms* (0.010), *children* (0.010), *people* (0.010), *states* (0.010), *concerns* (0.008)	Content management
Topic 8 (7.63%)	*tiktok* (0.021), *china* (0.015), *company* (0.009), *bytedance* (0.009), *americans* (0.009), *committee* (0.008), *source* (0.007), *government* (0.007), *drugs* (0.007), *part* (0.007)	ByteDance
Topic 9 (7.44%)	*information* (0.016), *moderation* (0.011), *tiktok* (0.010), *douyin* (0.010), *something* (0.010), *year* (0.009), *bytedance* (0.008), *data* (0.008), *users* (0.007), *teens* (0.007)	Content moderation

5.2 Co-occurrence network analysis of questions from two parties

The linguistic analysis of Questions reveals both shared concerns and distinct partisan priorities in this TikTok investigative hearing (see Figure 3). The bipartisan vocabulary, including terms like *algorithm*, *platform*, *privacy*, and *security*, indicates fundamental agreement on the need to scrutinize TikTok's operations. These shared terms cluster around three primary areas: (1) platform operations and management (evident in terms like *algorithm*, *app*, *content*, and *video*), (2) user protection concerns (reflected in words like *child*, *privacy*, and *security*), and (3) corporate oversight issues (shown by references to *ByteDance*, *company*, and *Project Texas*).

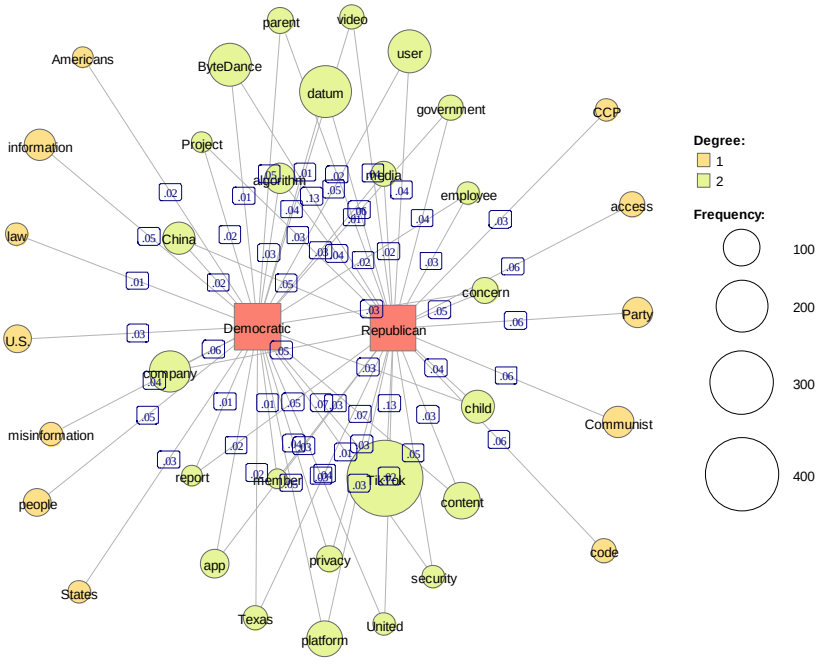

Figure 3. Co-occurrence network analysis for partisanship

Democratic committee members' preferential linguistic choices reveal a domestic, user-centered approach to the TikTok issue. Their preferred terms, including *Americans*, *information*, *law*, *misinformation*, *people*, *States*, and *U.S.*, suggest a primary concern with consumer protection, content quality, and regulatory frameworks. This vocabulary choice indicates that Democratic representatives generally frame TikTok as a domestic policy challenge centered on user protection and content regulation.

In contrast, Republican committee members' preferential vocabulary emphasizes national security and geopolitical concerns. Their preferred terms, including *access*, *CCP*, *code*, *Communist*, and *Party*, demonstrate a focus on TikTok's relationship with China and potential security vulnerabilities. They suggest that Republicans primarily view TikTok through the lens of national security threats and Chinese government influence.

These distinct vocabularies reveal fundamentally different frameworks for understanding and addressing TikTok-related challenges: Democrats approach it primarily as a domestic consumer protection issue requiring regulatory solutions, while Republicans frame it as a national security threat demanding more aggressive countermeasures against foreign influence.

5.3 Analysis of blame-avoiding strategies of Chew

Figure 4 shows the frequencies of the four macro-strategies used by Shouzi Chew. Among them, downplaying strategies rank the first, followed in turn by denying, shifting, and accepting strategies. This is in sharp contrast to the findings of blame-avoiding strategies used by Mark Zuckerberg during Facebook's two Congressional hearings about Cambridge Analytica, where downplaying strategies ranked the first, followed in turn by accepting, shifting and denying strategies (Liu and Lu, 2024). Although both cases concern data security in digital corporations, Chew resorted to more denying strategies than accepting strategies, whereas Zuckerberg showed the opposite. That may explain why Zuckberg's Congressional hearings turned out to be a success, while Chew's Congressional hearing was criticized by the US news media for being insincere and uncooperative (Shepardson & Ayyub, 2023; Thorbecke, 2023). Compared with denying strategies, accepting strategies at least can show the answerer's cooperative attitudes by the recognition of current issues with willingness to address these concerns, indicating an ethical behavior with alignment to the underlying shared societal values and expectations to construct an ethos-based self-representation (Giglioni, 2019).

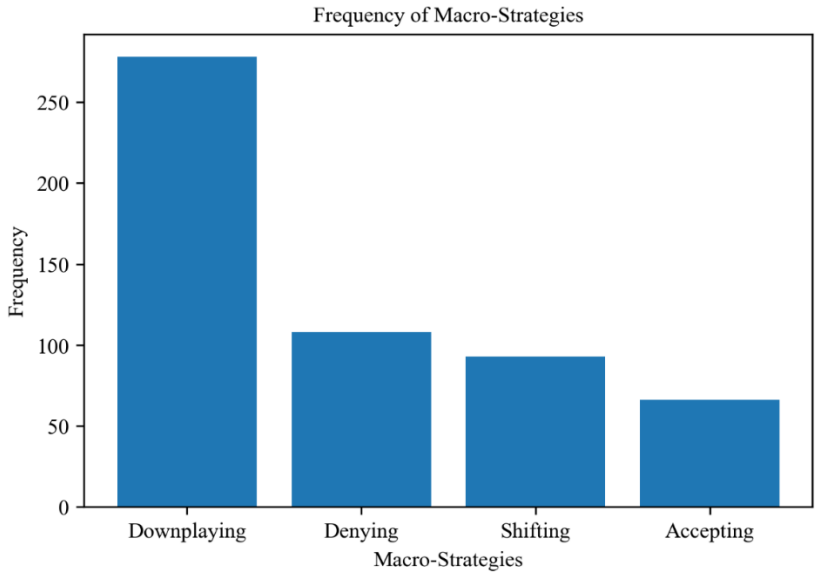

Figure 4. Frequency of Macro-strategies used by Chew

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the four strategies across different dimensions. Among them, the total frequencies of "CCP" rank first, which are followed in turn by those for "Content moderation," "ByteDance," "Privacy," "Content management," "Project Texas," "Code management," and "others."

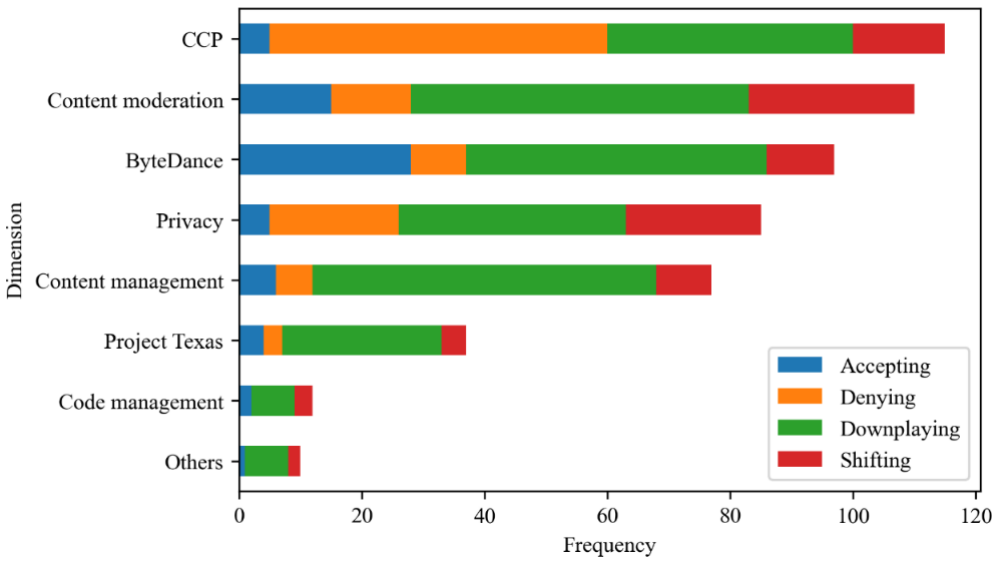

Figure 5. Distribution of Macro-strategies in each dimension

The strategies for "CCP" feature the overwhelmingly used denying and rare accepting strategies due to the political nature of the blame. It could strike a death blow on TikTok's business operation in the U.S., and thus, Chew was forced to resort frequently to denying strategies to reject TikTok's relations with CCP.

Strategies for “Content moderation” and “Privacy” are characterized by a high frequency of downplaying followed by shifting strategies. Nonetheless, “Content moderation” demonstrates a balanced use of accepting and denying strategies, while “Privacy” is featured by few accepting and more denying ones. The preference to use shifting and downplaying strategies can be ascribed to the nature of blame, which is common and largely true. As for “Content moderation,” the screening of dangerous content and misinformation is a common challenge in the social media industry, and for “Privacy,” the data security issue revolves around the inherent business model for digital corporations. However, unlike the inherent and relatively inflexible business model underlying the “Privacy” dimension which is difficult to alter, the challenge of screening harmful content and misinformation represents an ongoing issue that platforms must actively address. Consequently, accepting strategies were employed by Chew to reaffirm TikTok’s commitment to tackling the harmful content circulating on the platform, demonstrating a willingness to engage with public concerns and improve moderation practices.

Conversely, strategies for “Content management,” “Project Texas,” and “Code management” are featured by the dominance of downplaying with rare other strategies. This can be ascribed to the accusations in these dimensions relating to TikTok’s own corporate management practices, largely regarding how TikTok addressed the issues. The limited use of shifting strategies is due to the blame on TikTok’s own behavior, so Chew cannot shift responsibility to others. As these practices are what TikTok needs to do and has actually done, denying or accepting them loses its significance. Since some problems in these dimensions cannot be overtly avoided or require long-term solutions in the future, Chew could not speak in a resolute tone but had to frequently resort to downplaying strategies to mitigate the negative impact of the blame.

Those strategies for the “ByteDance” dimension stand out for the more usage of accepting than denying strategies. This can be attributed to the fact that TikTok does belong to ByteDance, which can hardly be denied. Therefore, Chew used accepting strategies to acknowledge this fact in order to demonstrate his sincerity for the hearing. Downplaying strategies also took a significant proportion since Chew used this approach to downplay the influence of ByteDance on TikTok’s operation in the U.S., striving to appease public concerns about any Chinese control of TikTok that raised national security concerns.

Therefore, Chew systemically employed distinct blame-avoidance strategies tailored to the nature of the accusations. He used denying strategies for politically charged blame and sensitive topics with a lethal impact on TikTok’s U.S. business. To show sincerity, he selectively used accepting strategies on fact-based accusations regarding TikTok’s relation with its parent company. Shifting strategies were used for universal problems among digital corporations when Chew obscured TikTok’s misconduct by attributing it to broader industry failures. Downplaying strategies were used for indefensible blame grounded by solid evidence, allowing Chew to reduce its negative impact.

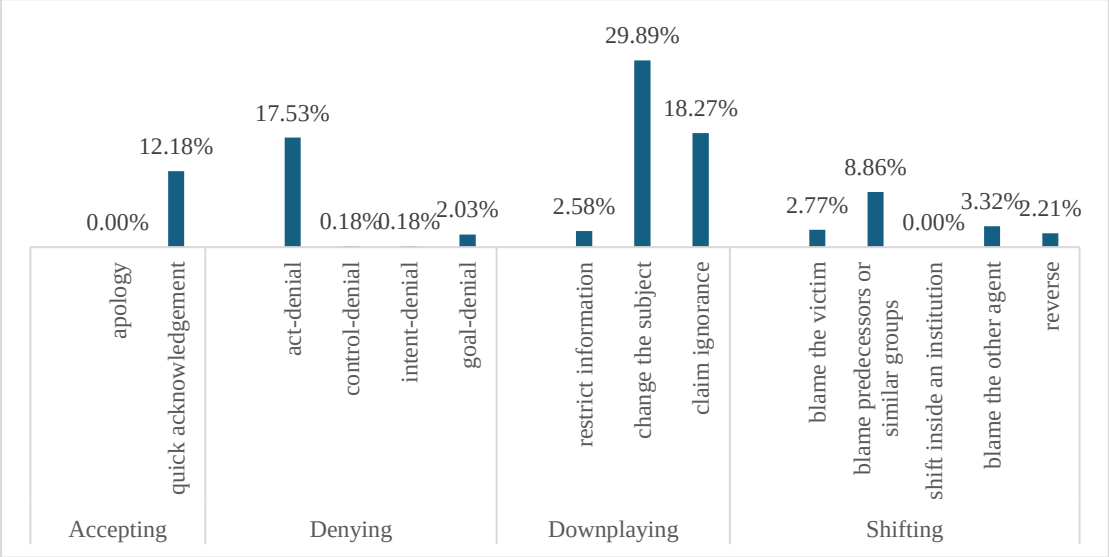

Figure 6. Percentage of Micro-strategies used by Chew

Figure 6 shows the percentages of each tactic among the four macro-strategies. Among them, "change the subject" (29.89%), "act-denial" (17.53%), and "claim ignorance" (18.27%) take the dominant share. Therefore, during the whole Congressional hearing, Chew either refused to answer the question directly by changing the subject, rejected the question completely by denying the existence of the question, or pretended to have no idea about the question. This result in the uncooperative images of Chew during the whole Congressional hearing and explains why committee members, e.g., Tony Cárdenas, accused him of being a "good dancer with words" in the hearing.

However, Chew also resorts to the use of some shifting tactics. Among them, the most frequent is "blaming predecessors or similar groups", by which Chew attributed the problems to the industry rather than TikTok itself. Other tactics, including "blaming the victim", "blaming the other agent", and "reverse", were rarely used. Consequently, despite the overall distribution of the macro-strategies, a closer examination of these tactics offers deeper insights into potential shortcomings in Chew's choice of strategies to deflect blame in the hearing. Given the limited understanding of how different tactics were applied across various topics, the following sections will provide a detailed analysis of the tactics used to address the two most frequently discussed dimensions: "CCP" within political involvement and "Content moderation" within technological manipulation (see Table 3).

5.3.1 Analysis of CCP

Figure 7 shows the distribution of the tactics for the questions related to "CCP". Among them, "act-denial" (46.09%) is overwhelmingly used, followed by "change the subject" (20.87%), and "claim ignorance" (13.91%). Unlike the other three denying tactics, "act-denial" emphasizes that what is blamed does not exist or happen. In other words, the accusations are unfounded. It is mainly used to address questions in three aspects: (1) TikTok's communication with the CCP (see Example 1), (2) whether TikTok promotes

or deletes content to advance CCP propaganda (see Example 2), and (3) whether the CCP can access U.S. TikTok user data (see Example 3). These questions reflect skepticism about TikTok's independence, transparency, and the possibility of its being used as a tool for CCP surveillance, propaganda, or national security threats. Therefore, Chew repeatedly resorted to "act-denial" to dismiss this kind of accusations.

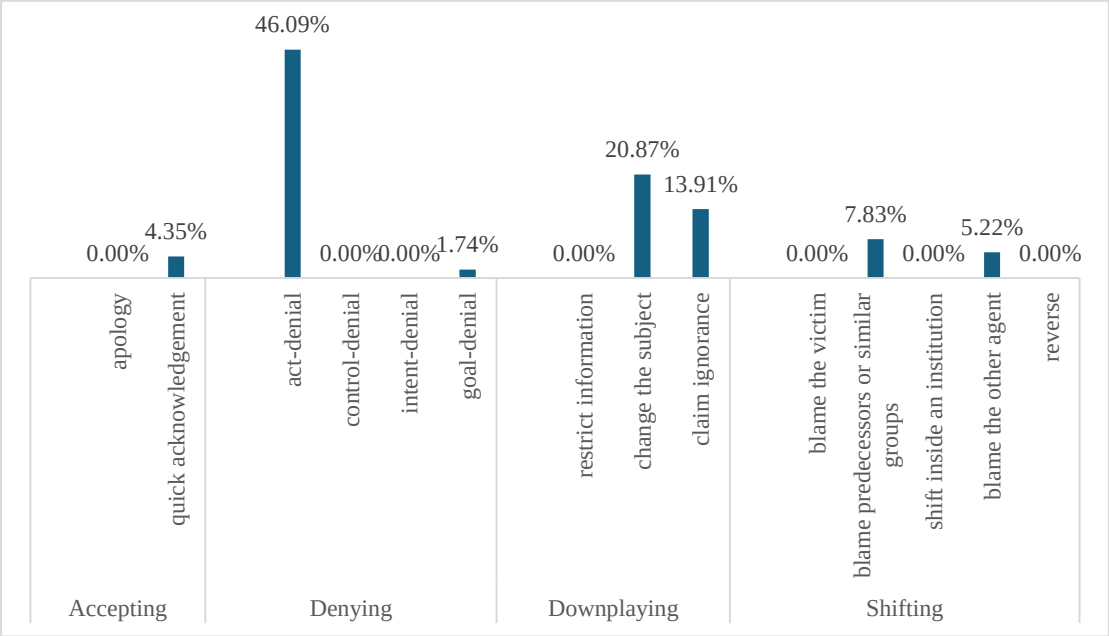

Figure 7. Percentage of micro-strategies used by Chew for "CCP"

(1) **Question**: Prior to today's hearing, did anyone affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party discuss this hearing with you or anyone else on TikTok's senior management?
Chew: Congressman, since I have been CEO of this company I have not had any discussions with Chinese government officials.

(2) **Question**: Can you say with 100 percent certainty that ByteDance or the CCP cannot use your company or its divisions to heat content to promote pro-CCP messages for an act of aggression against Taiwan?
Chew: We do not promote or remove content at the request of the Chinese government.

(3) **Question**: Has TikTok at any time provided the Chinese government with either precise GPS information collected from U.S. users or inferences made from that data?
Chew: That I can give you a straight—no.

Table 3. Coded examples for micro-strategies in "CCP" and "Content moderation"

Micro-strategies	Examples of CCP	Examples of Content moderation
Quick acknowledgement	Congressman, I just want to make sure I am understanding all these questions. I don't disagree with them, that there are data risks in general. That is what I meant.	Yes, our revenue is going up year over year.
Act-denial	I am not in regular communication with her.	I can tell you that TikTok does not allow illegal drugs on our platform.
Intent-denial	N/A	That particular case was a mismoderation. I believe that video had a picture of Osama bin Laden, so we thought it was content that was inappropriate.
Goal-denial	…It has nothing to do with TikTok, and it is for the purposes of content licensing in China.	N/A
Restrict information	N/A	Our heating process is approved by our local teams in the various countries.
Change the subject	That data is stored here, in American soil, by an American company, overseen by American.	Congresswoman, we do take illegal drugs content on our platform very seriously. It violates our guidelines. We proactively identify and remove them.
Claim ignorance	Congressman, I cannot speak on behalf of a Chinese government official.	I would need to look at the specifics of the whole video. There was a bit of lag just now. We couldn't see the whole video.
Blame the victim	N/A	But there are people who do have some—who do spout some dangerous misinformation, and we need to take that very seriously, invest in it, proactively identify it, and remove it from our platform.
Blame predecessors or similar groups	I want to say this again: I don't know of any other company in my industry who is offering this level of transparency.	This is an industry challenge for all of us here operating in this country.
Blame the other agent	Again, like I said, the fact is if you go onto our platform, you will find content that is critical of China.	In my home country, Singapore, there is almost no illegal drug content because Singapore has very strict drug laws.
Reverse	N/A	TikTok is a place for, you know, all our users to come and express their very diverse views.

However, mere denial is not very convincing. Chew also resorted to the tactic of "changing the subject" by foregrounding TikTok's role as a private company, TikTok's efforts to store data in the U.S. under Project Texas, which involves storing data on American soil, managed by an American company, and overseen by U.S. personnel with third-party monitoring. Examples include:

(4) **Question**: The PRC-developed algorithm used by TikTok, how does U.S. data get fed by that?
Chew: The U.S.—the algorithm that leads to the U.S. app is in the Oracle Cloud infrastructure, and is trained by U.S. and global data.

(5) **Question**: ByteDance owns TikTok. If ByteDance is—and the CCP owns ByteDance, because the CCP owns everybody in China. And so, by law, they can make them do whatever they want, and they say that, by law, you can't tell anyone about it. So they can make you hand over that data. Is that correct?
Chew: That data is stored here, in American soil, by an American company——overseen by American…

However, when faced with more sensitive or controversial questions, particularly those involving personal opinions or actions related to human rights or political affiliations, Chew frequently resorts to "claiming ignorance." This tactic allows him to avoid making definitive statements or taking potentially controversial stances. Examples include:

(6) **Question**: Does the Chinese government know the political affiliation of their Chinese citizens?
Chew: I cannot answer that question on their behalf.

(7) **Question**: Think we'd also want to know how it's anonymized and how, what, what oversight and enforcement we can count on.
Chew: Okay. I can get back to you on specifics.

(8) **Question**: It is correct. So, many of the workers who work at ByteDance are Communist Party members, right?
Chew: I wouldn't know.

Therefore, when addressing questions related to TikTok's alleged ties to the CCP, Chew employed three main strategies: (1) act-denial; (2) changing the subject; (3) claiming ignorance. While these tactics allow Chew to navigate the hearing without directly confirming committee members' concerns, they may not fully address the skepticism about TikTok's independence, transparency, or its potential influence by the CCP.

5.3.2 Analysis of Content Moderation

In the "Content Moderation" dimension, lawmakers expressed significant concerns about two main issues: (1) the potential censorship of politically sensitive content, and (2) the failure of the platform to effectively address harmful content and misinformation. For the first issue, committee members questioned whether TikTok, owned by ByteDance, suppressed content critical of China. These concerns highlighted fears that the platform could deliver politically biased content under Chinese influence. For the second issue, lawmakers raised concerns about TikTok's failure to adequately moderate harmful content and misinformation. This includes dangerous viral challenges, illicit drug trafficking, health-related falsehoods, election misinformation, neglect of Spanish-language content, and content harmful to children.

Content moderation is a challenge faced by all digital corporations and social media platforms, making it difficult to fully deny or entirely accept these accusations. This may explain why Chew employed a mixture of different tactics to respond to these criticisms. Among these, "changing the subject" is the most frequently used strategy (27.27%), followed by "claiming ignorance" (19.09%), "quick acknowledgment" (13.64%), and "act-denial" (12.73%) (see Figure 8).

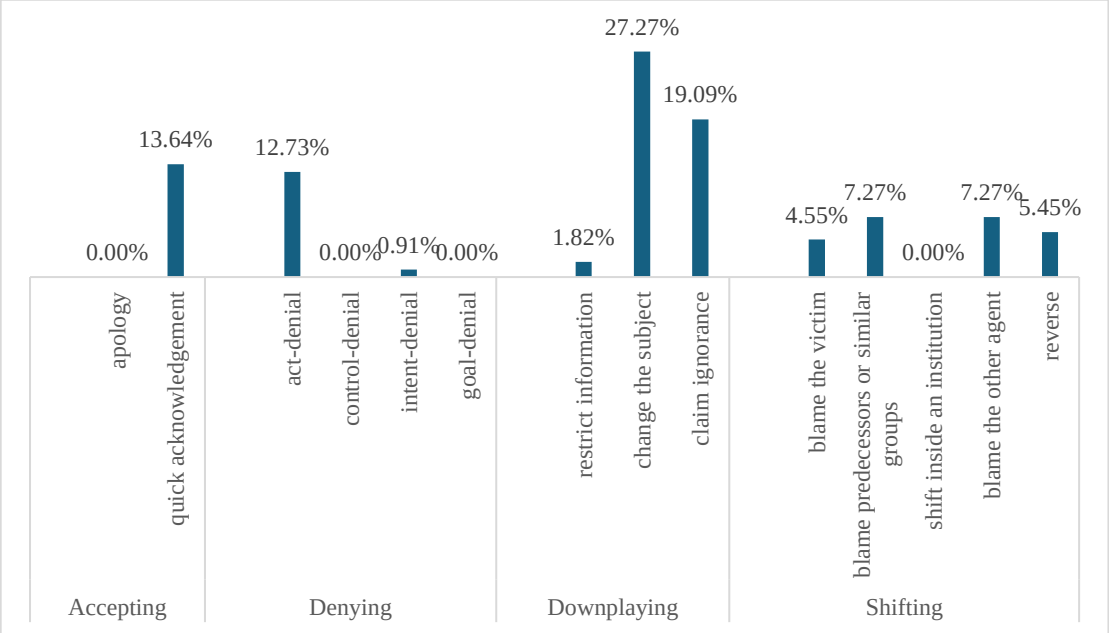

Figure 8. Percentage of micro-strategies used by Chew in "Content moderation"

Chew frequently resorted to "changing the subject" to redirect questions requiring specific information about TikTok's content moderation problems and the measures taken to address them. Instead of directly answering, he emphasized TikTok's community policies, commitments, and ongoing efforts, which can help build a positive image of TikTok. Examples include:

(9) **Question**: I am sorry to report it is on your platform, though.
Chew: Congresswoman, I don't think I can sit here and say that we are perfect in doing this. We do work very hard——

(10) **Question**: OK. Do you happen to know how TikTok—how— if TikTok can effectively ensure that Spanish-speaking users between the ages of 13 and 17 are not being targeted by ads promoting harmful content?
Chew: We have very strict policies for our users who are in the teenage age group, and regardless of what language that they speak. So we want to make sure that they are given a very safe experience on our platform, regardless of the language they——

(11) **Question**: Okay. So you don't, you don't have an answer then. Okay. I, I will look forward in, in your coming, you're coming back. We've heard a lot about the, the concerns about children who may be on TikTok. Mr. Chew, at what age do you think it would be appropriate for a young person to get on TikTok?
Chew: We have three different experiences here in the United States. There is an experience for under 13s, which is highly, highly restricted.

Chew frequently used "claiming ignorance" in response to questions requiring specific or detailed information. This tactic allowed him to avoid providing a direct answer while committing to following up later. Examples include:

(12) **Question**: Mr. Chew, can you detail how you responded to that report? Did you respond to that report that I just mentioned?
Chew: I need to look at the specifics of the report, Congressman, and I can get back to you on that.

(13) **Question**: So my question is, do you work with other platforms to ensure flagged user content isn't permitted to jump from one platform to others?
Chew: I will check with my team.

However, "quick acknowledgement" was also used by Chew to address these questions that concern the platform's duty to monitor and remove harmful content, ensure consistency across languages, and uphold societal values. They are usually yes/no questions and cannot be denied. Examples include:

(14) **Question**: Mr. Chew, just yes or no: Do you believe a requirement for annual content moderation practices for social media platforms would be beneficial? Yes or no.
Chew: Yes.

(15) **Question**: And do you know if TikTok has a specific strategy for tackling Spanish-language content that violates its trust and safety guidelines?
Chew: We do.

(16) **Question**: Does TikTok support freedom of speech?
Chew: Yes.

Chew used "act-denial" to reject accusations that TikTok censors politically sensitive content or allows harmful material, such as illicit drug-related content or content related to human rights abuses. Examples include:

(17) **Question**: Have any moderation tools been used to remove content on TikTok associated with the Uyghur genocide, yes or no?
Chew: We do not remove that kind of content. TikTok is a place for freedom of expression, and Chair Rodgers, like I said, if you use our app, you can go on it, and you will see a lot of users around the world expressing content on that topic and many others.

(18) **Question**: While you were at ByteDance—you were the CFO for ByteDance—did Douyin allow related illicit drug trafficking or challenges resulting in death or injury to kids?
Chew: Congressman, I represent TikTok here today. I can tell you that TikTok does not allow illegal drugs——On our platform.

Chew's responses to "Content Moderation" questions reflect a strategic mix of tactics: (1) "changing the subject" to emphasize TikTok's policies and efforts; (2) "claiming ignorance" to avoid providing specific details; (3) "quick acknowledgment" for unavoidable responsibilities. These tactics reveal TikTok's attempt to balance acknowledgment of its responsibilities while deflecting or downplaying controversial topics. However, the reliance on downplaying strategies and avoidance tactics may not fully satisfy committee members' concerns about TikTok's accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in addressing harmful content and misinformation.

6. Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides what is believed to be a comprehensive corpus-assisted discourse analysis of the Congressional hearing of TikTok on March 23rd, 2023, utilizing advanced text-mining techniques to uncover the underlying dynamics of the hearing. Through topic modeling, the questions raised during the hearing were classified into nine topics grouped into seven dimensions: CCP, ByteDance, content moderation, code management, privacy, Project Texas, and content management. These classifications reveal that the hearing primarily focused on two major concerns: TikTok's connections with the CCP and its practices in digital management. The former emphasizes political concerns, the latter centering on technical issues. While both political parties demonstrated interest in technical concerns, Republicans focused more

on political matters, whereas Democrats concentrated more on technical and managerial issues. This dual focus not only highlights the Congressional hearing as both a political and technical investigation but also suggests that it leans more heavily toward political scrutiny than technical exploration.

Further analysis was conducted to examine Chew's blame-avoiding strategies when addressing these concerns. The findings indicate that while Chew relied heavily on downplaying strategies, denial strategies were also frequently employed, surpassing shifting and accepting strategies. A closer examination of these strategies across different topics reveals distinct patterns: for questions related to the CCP, Chew preferred the tactic of "act-denial," while for content moderation issues, he frequently used "changing the subject." These preferential choices reflect a strategic response tailored to the nature of the accusations. Moreover, when compared to Mark Zuckerberg's Congressional hearings (Liu and Lu, 2024), Chew demonstrated a greater reliance on denial, subject-changing, and claiming ignorance, which may explain the criticism he faced for being perceived as uncooperative during the hearing.

The implications of this study are twofold. First, it sheds light on the impact of political motivations on what is ostensibly a technical issue. The Congressional hearing, which is expected to function as an investigative inquiry, appears to be more manipulative and politically driven than explorative. This reflects a broader trend in which political considerations overshadow purely technical discussions in high-profile hearings involving technology companies (Epstein & Medzini, 2022; Miller, 2009; Sayed & Muhammad, 2022). Second, this study highlights the value of computer-assisted text-mining methods in facilitating in-depth discourse analysis (Poole, 2022). Topic modeling efficiently categorizes questions into thematic clusters (Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016), while co-occurrence network analysis reveals nuanced differences in party-specific concerns (Liu, 2024). These computational methods provide a robust foundation for further manual analysis, enabling a deeper exploration of blame-avoiding strategies.

In summary, this study not only enhances our understanding of the TikTok Congressional hearing but also illustrates how political and scientific dimensions intersect in such high-stakes discussions (Liu and Lu, 2024). It underscores the importance of using advanced computational tools to analyze and interpret complex discourse, offering valuable insights into the blame-avoiding strategies employed by key figures like Chew and the broader implications for technology governance in politicized contexts (Epstein & Medzini, 2022; Sheingate, 2006). Nevertheless, this study only focuses on one single case. Future studies will focus on more Congressional hearings on scientific and technical issues to further illuminate the dynamics between science communication and politics in Congressional hearings and the specific strategies taken to address these issues.

References

Allahyari, R. A. (1997). The micro-politics of worthy homelessness: Interactive moments in congressional hearings*. *Sociological Inquiry*, *67*(1), 27-47.
Alphonso, G. (2010). Hearth and soul: Economics and culture in partisan conceptions of the family in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920. *Studies in American Political Development*, *24*(2), 206-232.
Asen, R., & Gent, W. (2019). Reconsidering symbolic use: a situational model of the use of research evidence in polarised legislative hearings. *Evidence & Policy*, *15*(4), 525-541.
Baffy, M. (2020). Doing 'being interrupted' in political talk. *Language in Society*, *49*(5), 689-715, Article Pii s0047404520000299.
Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. Continuum.
Baker, P. (2014). 'Bad wigs and screaming Mimis': Using corpus-assisted techniques to carry out critical discourse analysis of the representation of trans people in the British press. In C. Hart & P. Cap (Eds.), *Contemporary critical discourse studies* (pp. 211-236). Bloomsbury Publishing.
Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Khosravinik, M., KrzyŻAnowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, *19*(3), 273-306.
Balkan-Sahin, S. (2020). Tracing discursive strategies to understand the U.S. withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal. *Uluslararasi Iliskiler-International Relations*, *17*(66), 61-76.
Bednarek, M., Crosthwaite, P., & García, A. I. (2020). Corpus linguistics and education in Australia. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *43*(2), 105-116.
Bonnicksen, A. L. (2000). Cloning and beyond: Shaping public policy in a pluralistic context. *Cloning*, *2*(3), 146-148.
Burstein, P., & Hirsh, C. E. (2007). Interest organizations, information, and policy innovation in the U.S. Congress. *Sociological Forum (Randolph, N.J.)*, *22*(2), 174-199.
Capano, G., Howlett, M., Pal, L. A., & Ramesh, M. (2023). Dealing with the challenges of legitimacy, values, and politics in policy advice. *Policy and Society*, *42*(3), 275-287.Carlin, E. P., & Remmel, R. S. (2022). Assessing US congressional exposure to the issue of emerging infectious disease risk prior to 2020. *Health Security*, *20*(3), 212-221.
Carr, T. P. (2006). *Hearings in the House of Representatives: A guide for preparation and procedure*. Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress.
Chen, F., & Wang, G. (2023). A social network approach to critical discourse studies. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *38*(2), 515-529.
Davies, S. R. (2021). An empirical and conceptual note on science communication's role in society. *Science Communication*, *43*(1), 116-133.
Dudo, A., & Besley, J. C. (2016). Scientists' prioritization of communication objectives for public engagement. *PLoS One*, *11*(2), e0148867.
Epstein, D., & Medzini, R. (2022). Conversations with fellow leaders: Privacy framing in congressional hearings after Cambridge Analytica. *Telecommunications Policy*, *46*(10), 102427.
Faehnrich, B., & Ruser, A. (2019). 'Operator, please'—Connecting truth and power at the science-policy interface. *Journal of Science Communication*, *18*(03).
Fisher, D. R., Leifeld, P., & Iwaki, Y. (2012). Mapping the ideological networks of American climate politics. *Climatic Change*, *116*(3-4), 523-545.
Friginal, E., & Hardy, J. A. (2021). *The Routledge handbook of corpus approaches to discourse analysis*. Routledge.
Giglioni, C. (2019). Discursive construction of ethos-based framework for public identity: Investigative congressional hearings. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, *33*, 109-124.
Giglioni, C. (2020). *Linguistic and rhetorical perspectives on congressional hearings*. Frank & Timme.
GovInfo. (2024, December 3). *About Congressional Hearings*. https://www.govinfo.gov/help/chrg

Haarman, L., & Lombardo, L. (Eds.). (2009). *Evaluation and stance in war news*. Continuum
Higuchi, K. (2016). A two-step approach to quantitative content analysis: KH Coder tutorial using Anne of Green Gables (Part I). *Ritsumeikan Social Science Review*, *52*(3), 77-91.
Higuchi, K. (2017). A two-step approach to quantitative content analysis: KH Coder tutorial using Anne of Green Gables (Part II). *Ritsumeikan Social Science Review*, *53*, 137-147.
Kadkhodaee, E., & Ghasemi Tari, Z. (2019). Otherising Iran in American political discourse: Case study of a post-JCPOA senate hearing on Iran sanctions. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(1), 109-128.
Leech, G. (1992). Corpora and theories of linguistic performance. In J. Svartvik (Ed.), *Directions in corpus linguistics* (pp. 105-122). Mouton de Gruyter.
Liu, M. (2024). Towards a 'synergy' of text mining and critical discourse analysis: a corpus-assisted discourse study of imagining China in Hong Kong political discourse. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *39*(2), 625-637.
Liu, M., & Huang, J. (2024). Framing responsibilities for climate change in Chinese and American newspapers: A corpus-assisted discourse study. *Journalism*, *25*(8), 1792–1811.
Liu, M., & Huang, J. (Forthcoming). Incorporating text mining into critical discourse studies: A corpus-assisted discourse study of press representations of climate change in China. In B. Forchtner & F. Zappettini (Eds.), *Handbook on Critical discourse studies*. Edward Elgar.
Liu, M., & Lu, Y. (2024). Blame-avoiding strategies for a digital scandal: A critical discourse analysis of Mark Zuckerberg's congressional hearings. *Pragmatics and Society*, *15*(3), 471-494.
Lynch, J. (2009). Stem cells and the embryo: Biorhetoric and scientism in congressional debate. *Public Understanding of Science*, *18*(3), 309-324.
Mahatmya, D., & Gring-Pemble, L. M. (2014). DREAMers and their families: A family impact analysis of the DREAM Act and implications for family well-being. *Journal of Family Studies*, *20*(1), 79-87.
Mahl, D., Guenther, L., Schäfer, M. S., Meyer, C., & Siegen, D. (2020). "We are a bit blind about it": A qualitative analysis of climate change-related perceptions and communication across South African communities. *Environmental Communication*, *14*(6), 802-815.
Mando, J. (2016). Constructing the vicarious experience of proximity in a Marcellus Shale public hearing. *Environmental Communication*, *10*(3), 352-364.
Martin, F., & Johnson, M. (2015). More efficient topic modelling through a noun only approach. In *Proceedings of the Australasian Language Technology Association Workshop 2015* (pp. 111-115).
Mautner, G. (2009). Checks and balances: How corpus linguistics can contribute to CDA. In R. Wodak & C. F. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (2nd ed., pp. 122-143). Sage.
Mautner, G. (2022). What can a corpus tell us about discourse? In A. O'Keeffe & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of corpus linguistics* (2nd ed., pp. 250-262). Routledge.
Metag, J., Wintterlin, F., & Klinger, K. (2023). Editorial: Science communication in the digital age—new actors, environments, and practices. *Media and Communication*, *11*(1), 212-216.
Miller, J. (2009). Soft power and state-firm diplomacy: Congress and IT corporate activity in China. *International Studies Perspectives*, *10*(3), 285-302.
Moernaut, R., Mast, J., Temmerman, M., & Broersma, M. (2022). Hot weather, hot topic. Polarization and sceptical framing in the climate debate on Twitter. *Information, Communication & Society*, *25*(8), 1047-1066.
Morley, J., & Bayley, P. (Eds.). (2009). *Corpus-assisted discourse studies on the Iraq conflict: Wording the war*. Routledge.
Nowlin, M. C. (2016). Modeling issue definitions using quantitative text analysis. *Policy*

Studies Journal, *44*(3), 309-331.
O'Halloran, K., & Coffin, C. (2004). Checking over-interpretation and under-interpretation: Help from corpora in critical linguistics. In C. Coffin, A. Hewings, & K. O'Halloran (Eds.), *Applying English grammar: Functional and corpus approaches* (pp. 275-297). Arnold.
Okada, Y. (2019). Discursive construction of "antisocial" institutional conduct: Microanalysis of Takata's failure at the US congressional hearings. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *142*, 105-115.
Oleszek, W. J., Oleszek, M. J., Rybicki, E., & Heniff Jr, B. (2015). *Congressional procedures and the policy process*. CQ Press.
Partington, A. (2004). Corpora and discourse, a most congruous beast. In A. Partington, J. Morley, & L. Haarman (Eds.), *Corpora and discourse* (pp. 11-20). Peter Lang.
Perna, L. W., Orosz, K., & Kent, D. C. (2019). The role and contribution of academic researchers in congressional hearings: A critical discourse analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, *56*(1), 111-145.
Poole, R. (2022). *Corpus-assisted ecolinguistics*. Bloomsbury Academic.
Potipiroon, W. (2024). Beyond bipartisan support: analyzing the TikTok ban votes in the US House of Representatives. *Global Public Policy and Governance*, *4*(2), 197-223.
Rayson, P. (2008). From key words to key semantic domains. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, *13*(4), 519-549.
Saghaye-Biria, H. (2012). American Muslims as radicals? A critical discourse analysis of the US congressional hearing on 'the extent of radicalization in the American Muslim community and that community's response'. *Discourse & Society*, *23*(5), 508-524.
Sayed, S. K., & Muhammad, M. J. (2022). A pragmatic study of image repair in crisis management selected cases. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, *14*(1), 2480-2491.
Segal, A. (2019). Seizing core technologies: China responds to US technology competition. *China Leadership Monitor*, *60*, 1-12.
Sheingate, A. D. (2006). Promotion versus precaution: The evolution of biotechnology policy in the United States. *British Journal of Political Science*, *36*(2), 243-268.
Shepardson, D., & Ayyub, R. (2023). TikTok congressional hearing: CEO Shou Zi Chew grilled by US lawmakers. *Reuters*. Retrieved April 22, 2025, from: https://www.reuters.com/technology/tiktok-ceo-face-tough-questions-support-us-ban-grows-2023-03-23/
Subtirelu, N. C. (2013). 'English... It's part of our blood': Ideologies of language and nation in United States congressional discourse. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *17*(1), 37-65.
Suldovsky, B., & Akin, H. (2023). The role of trust in communicating scientific consensus and the environmental benefits of genetically engineered crops: Experimental evidence of a backfire effect. *Environmental Communication*, *17*(1), 101-118.
Thorbecke, C. (2023). TikTok CEO in the hot seat: 5 takeaways from his first appearance before Congress. *The Cable News Network*. Retrieved April 22, 2025, from https://edition.cnn.com/2023/03/23/tech/tiktok-ceo-hearing/index.html
Törnberg, A., & Törnberg, P. (2016). Combining CDA and topic modeling: Analyzing discursive connections between Islamophobia and anti-feminism on an online forum. *Discourse & Society*, *27*(4), 401-422.
Tzoumis, K. (2013). *Environmental policymaking in congress: Issue definitions in wetlands, great lakes and wildlife policies*. Routledge.
Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). Political discourse and racism: Describing others in Western parliaments. In *The language and politics of exclusion: Others in discourse* (Vol.2, pp. 31–64).
Vessey, R. (2013). Challenges in cross-linguistic corpus-assisted discourse studies. *Corpora*, *8*(1), 1-26.
Widdowson, H. G. (1995). Discourse analysis: a critical view. *Language and literature*, *4*(3), 157-172.

Widdowson, H. G. (2004). *Text, context, pretext: Critical issues in discourse analysis* (Vol. 12). John Wiley & Sons.

Yan, J., Leidner, D. E., & Peters, U. (2024). Global techno-politics: A review of the current status and opportunities for future research. *International Journal of Information Management*, *75*, 102729-.

Yoo, G. J. (2008). Immigrants and welfare: Policy constructions of deservingness. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, *6*(4), 490-507.