

# The expression of "United Front" in "Salvation Daily" under the textual analysis method

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**Abstract:** *With the rapid development of the Internet and new media, online public opinion shows the direction of diversified demands. Domestically, it has become more difficult for the official media to lead public opinion, and internationally, the work in the field of ideology is still complicated. The "unification" of public ideology is crucial in solving various social problems, such as the Taiwan issue, and in strengthening and improving the methods and approaches of social management. The Salvation Daily was a newspaper that came into being during the period of total resistance in the last century, and it was also a newspaper for the united front in the cultural sector. During its brief period of operation, the Daily Salvation Daily reached a daily circulation of 8,000 copies in its heyday, and its influence spread to Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Jiangxi, Sichuan, and even Hong Kong and Nanyang. The Salvation Daily became one of the most influential progressive newspapers in the entire southwest region and played a significant role in promoting the "United Front" of the whole nation. This paper uses textual analysis to analyze the news texts and newspaper characteristics of the Salvation Daily during the war period, to explore the success of its "united front" propaganda and "national unity" consciousness, as well as its contribution to today's "united front" ideological work. The paper also discusses the success of its "United Front" propaganda and "national unity" awareness-raising work, as well as the inspiration it brings to the present-day "United Front" ideological work.*

**Keywords:** *Daily Salvation; textual analysis; semiotics; psychoanalysis; united war thinking*

## 1. Background of the selected topic

With the rapid development of the Internet, the open, diversified and interactive way of information dissemination by new media has increased the difficulty of controlling China's ideology. Although China has accomplished many breakthroughs in the field of ideology in recent years, the overall environment of public opinion guidance is in fact still complex and changeable. Secondly, while expressing various demands and wishes, netizens are more likely to find resonance in various public opinion forums. Once individual expressions are transformed into group expressions of a certain scope, regional, local and occasional issues will be turned into public topics of "violent spectacle". The "loss of focus" of the group consciousness makes the concern for individual phenomena and cases turn into a broader and deeper discussion, until it rises to the negation of the social system and the state system.

Typical cases are the riots in Hong Kong and the unresolved Taiwan issue. In both cases, the emergence or fermentation of the issues is actually related to the complex orientation of public opinion, of course, there is no lack of interference from some external forces. Therefore, the guidance of "united war" in public opinion or the propaganda of "national unity" in the ideological field are both important to solve the two issues. Especially for the Taiwan issue, which is still unresolved today, it is advisable to learn from the "United Front" propaganda work of the "Salvation Daily" during the War of Resistance in the last century, so as to lay a good ideological foundation for the real realization of the "United Front" in the future [1].

## 2. Research significance

In terms of theoretical significance, the study of the "United Front" propaganda of the "Salvation Daily" during the war period has theoretical implications for the work in the ideological field today. On the practical level, the wartime "United Front" discourse of the Salvation Daily has practical significance in guiding public opinion on various hotly debated social issues or the larger issue of Taiwan. The "United Front" discourse of the Daily Salvation News is a guide to the "United Front" in the ideological sphere for solving many of today's social problems or the larger Taiwan issue. It also provides lessons for dealing

with various public opinion crises in the Internet era.

### 3. Research Methodology

This paper mainly adopts the textual analysis method and its theory of "ideational practice" proposed by Hall, the semiotic research method and its analysis of explicit meaning, implicit meaning and mythology, and the psychoanalysis method and its non-Lloydian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories [2]. This paper takes some typical news reports from the initial period of the outbreak of the war (mainly from 1937 to 1938) as the object of analysis, and explores the expressions of the "United Front" and "Great Unity" discourse hidden behind the news texts of the Salvation Daily.

Secondly, the paper is supplemented by some documentary research methods to sort out the overall characteristics and philosophy of the newspaper during the war period. and the paper also analyzes how the "United Front" thinking of the newspaper at that time has inspired the "United Front" public opinion work today.

### 4. Newspaper Introduction

The Shanghai Cultural Salvation Association had organized a series of vigorous anti-Japanese salvation movements to complement the military resistance, and thus the Salvation Daily was born. Although the life span of Salvation Daily was relatively short, the impact the newspaper had on its readers, the people and even Chinese society as a whole throughout history, especially during the war period, cannot be ignored. In addition to satisfying the public's need for wartime news, Salvation Daily was particularly prominent in its contribution to the ideological "unification of war".

### 5. Based on the purpose of United Front Work, it has received wide response

The issue of the Salvation Daily pointed out clearly: "Now that a comprehensive national war has been waged, how to make the war win and revive the country from its perilous state depends, on the one hand, on the loyal and brave soldiers in the front, but on the other hand, it is also necessary for the people in the rear to stand firm and back it up. This is the righteousness of the so-called universal resistance to war."

The following is a textual analysis of how the Daily Salvation practiced its aims and achieved a wide response from the public.

#### 5.1. *Super partisan newspaper to attract readers from all walks of life*

##### 5.1.1. *Promoting positive speech "left-center-right"*

From the sources of the news texts published in the Salvation Daily during this period, it can be concluded that it reported and propagated a wide range of positive opinions, regardless of party affiliation or political power. In other words, the Salvation Daily was willing to publish the voices of the Nationalist Party, the Communist Party, or non-partisan centrists, as long as they were propagated in favor of the war effort and the authorities as a whole.

First of all, for the concept of sign, Saussure believed that a sign consists of two parts: a sound or an image that can be perceived at the physical level, i.e., the energetic reference, and a concept that can be perceived at the psychological level, i.e., the referent, brought about by this sound and image. For example, in the semiotic analysis of the camera lens, the upward shot is the energy referent, and the power and majesty represented by the upward shot is the referent.

In the same way, the act of publishing the speeches of different parties in the Salvation Daily can be understood as a kind of "energy reference", and the Salvation Daily conveys a "neutral" newspaper concept to the society, or leaves a "objective" newspaper concept to the readers. The "objective" impression of the newspaper to the readers is a "referent". From a semiotic point of view, we can conclude that the newspaper is undoubtedly successful in this way. In other words, the Salvation Daily reported positive anti-Japanese rhetoric on a wide scale in a form that transcended party affiliation. Not only did it take into account the forces of the left-center-right, but it also left readers from all walks of life with the psychological impression that its content was objective and neutral, successfully conveying the "meaning" of its symbols.

### ***5.1.2. Super partisan glorification of advanced deeds***

The ultra-partisanship of the Salvation Daily was also reflected in its glorification of advanced deeds, including its coverage of the active fighting of the Kuomintang and the fighting of the Eighth Route Army against Japan.

The Salvation Daily reported in detail on the Pingxingguan victory and included it in the first edition of the newspaper's highlights.

On October 31, 1937, the Salvation Daily devoted a page to Xie Jinyuan and other 800 brave men, namely the 524th Regiment of the 88th Division of the 9th Army Group of the National Revolutionary Army, who defended the Sihang Warehouse.

"Reproduction" simply translates as "something that is presented again", but Hall defines it as "ideational practice", which not only transmits existing meanings but also constructs new ones. In other words, the reproduction has a certain ideological character. The words "the enemy officers and soldiers were killed" and "the enemy did not succeed" in the text are actually disguised expressions of the victory. In other words, it can be understood by the theory of "reproduction" in text analysis [3].

The report on the Pingxingguan victory in the Salvation Daily, in terms of both the headline and the content of the news text, reflects the media's reproduction of the news and provides the audience with an explanation of the meaning of the news event. In other words, it expresses the victory of the war, as well as the military wisdom of our army and the bravery of our soldiers. Hall's theory of "ideational practice" also points out that media reproduction is a process of selection, exclusion, paraphrasing, and presentation, and that there is a gap between "objective facts" and "objective facts. The report of the Pingxingguan Victory is also the selection, exclusion, and paraphrasing of the battle situation by the Salvation Daily, and the final presentation of the battle situation that emphasizes the "total capture" of our troops, which actually reflects the ideological characteristics of the reproduction.

Through the analysis of the theory of "reproduction" in textual analysis and the theory of metaphor in semiotics, it is easy to conclude that the positive coverage of the anti-Japanese work of the Nationalist and Communist Parties in the Salvation Daily is led by a certain ideology. It not only praised the National Revolutionary Army and the Eighth Route Army for their heroic resistance on the front line, but also attracted a group of readers who were concerned about the war on all sides, and invariably aroused the public's concern about the overall war situation.

## ***5.2. Set the tone of language, condense people's hearts and gather strength***

### ***5.2.1. Exposing enemy atrocities and conspiracies and arousing public indignation***

On October 4, 1938, Lu Yi published an article entitled "Return from the Coast of Jiangsu and Zhejiang" in "Save the Newspaper", exposing the situation when Japanese troops occupied our coastal islands of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, such as Sigao Island, Huanglong Mountain and Huadao Mountain.

The author used words such as "entrenchment", "harassment" and "shamelessness" to describe the Japanese army, and unapologetically pointed out that the Japanese army's so-called "military blockade" was in fact an act of piracy [4].

One of the common features of many such articles in the Salvation Daily is that they reproduce in detail the horrific acts of aggression of the Japanese army for the readers, in order to awaken the consciousness of the people and arouse their sympathy for their suffering compatriots and their anger against the inhumane enemy army. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, these news texts succeeded in stimulating the subconsciousness of the whole nation against the war and largely increased the cohesion of the whole nation during the war period.

### ***5.2.2. Focus on the news of the war victory to boost national morale***

In addition to exposing the atrocities committed by the enemy, the tone of the language used by "Salvation Daily" in reporting news of our troops in combat was also very clear. In its war reports, the Salvation Daily mostly used positive terms such as "brave," "tenacious," "fighting," and "restored. The Daily Salvation used more positive terms such as "bravery," "tenacity," "fighting," "restoration," and more derogatory terms such as "collusion," "escape," "capture," "siege," and "killed." "killed" and other derogatory terms were used to describe the enemy forces. The skillful choice of key words in the Salvation Daily undoubtedly created a public opinion offensive favorable to the war effort.

## **6. Vivid and lively writing style, catching the reader's attention**

In addition to the preceding analysis of the news texts of the Daily Salvation, we can also use textual analysis to explore the unique features of the Daily Salvation and the ideological philosophy that underpins these ideas.

The Daily Salvation is full of lively and interesting news texts, and the textual analysis approach to understanding the philosophy of the Daily Salvation is an act of breaking the "stereotypes" that the public has about the official press. According to Lippmann, stereotypes are simplistic, fixed views of members of another group, accompanied by moral evaluations, likes and dislikes. The publication of such literary statements in the Salvation Journal, on the one hand, reduced the stereotypical rigidity of the articles and made them more viable; on the other hand, it broke the "stereotype" of the public that newspapers could only publish serious news and information. On the other hand, it also breaks the stereotype that newspapers can only publish serious news. In addition, from the perspective of textual analysis, this concept of newspaper management also enabled readers to understand the authorities in the mood of reading short articles and novels, which to a certain extent eased the tensions of the people during the war period, thus making them happy to read the articles of the "Salvation Daily". Finally, it helped the "Salvation Daily" to express the "United Front" discourse.

## **7. The supplement is colorful and generates public interest**

The Daily Salvation's colorful literary supplements are also a highlight of the newspaper's ideological leadership. In addition to news and current affairs commentary in the first three sections, the fourth section is filled with a large number of short literary articles such as poems, fairy tales and ballads.

Partner, You Should Smell the Fishy Wind" is a poem published by Wang Tuzhao in the supplement of "Save the Newspaper". In the poem, he wrote: "The fragrance of people spreads across the northern plains and valleys, diffusing through the long sky." The "fragrance of man" comes from "the flesh, the sinews, and the belly of our fellow countrymen." In powerful words, the poem warns readers that countless compatriots are dying for the war and the country is facing unprecedented danger. "This late night will not allow you to pretend to be hazy!" The author's strong appeal to the people to participate in the war together is evident in one sentence.

Flaming Island" is a short fairy tale published by the famous novelist Bao Tianxiao in the literary supplement "Save the Newspaper" during the Republican period. "If everyone donates one dollar, we can buy 2,000 bombers, and we can fight with the Japanese bandits." "It wouldn't be easy for each person to donate one dollar. For example, the little sister who still holds in her hands, where does she get a dollar. Today a man who came to ask for food at the door, he also could not get a dollar." The fairy tale is about a boy's innocent conversation with his mother, reflecting from the side that even children have a sense of resistance to the enemy during the national war. The fairy tale is lively and easy to understand, and the moral is incomparably thought-provoking.

To sum up, it is easy to find that in addition to news and information, the Salvation Daily also set up literary supplements such as poems and nursery rhymes. However, from the perspective of textual analysis, the content of these supplements was also essentially for the purpose of propagating the "United Front", i.e., not only to satisfy readers' reading interests, but also with a strong ideological concept. The colorful content of the supplements and the flexible and lively texts were all "inside" an appeal to the masses to unite against the war. Behind the superficially light-hearted and witty texts, the inner viewpoint conveyed is still the "United Front" propaganda. Words such as "Japanese bandits," "fight," "compatriots," and "sacrifice" in the text reveal the text is a deeper explanation that the country is facing a crisis.

In addition, unlike news and editorials, short articles such as poems, fairy tales and novels were a more "grounded" way to promote anti-war policies and mobilize the masses to unite against the Japanese. Thus, in the process of running the newspaper, the Salvation Daily did not neglect its own supplemental content, but used it to appeal to the people to participate in the war effort, successfully attracting more "underclass" people and expanding its audience [5].

## **8. Close contact with the masses and gain the goodwill of the people**

The success of the newspaper's ideological leadership is also attributed to the fact that it is a

newspaper based on the people and for the people. Through the analysis of the newspaper's text and the setting of its sections, the Salvation Daily demonstrates its pursuit of service, interactivity, and attention to readers' voices.

In addition to publishing readers' articles, the newspaper even set up a column called "Salvation Opinion Box" in order to open up the way of speech, and on September 28, 1938, the column "Salvation Opinion Box" published Li Hao's "Two Suggestions for the Publishing Industry". Li Hao believed that the major publishing circles in Shanghai should unite to save manpower and material resources; he also pointed out that there should be more children's publications. "Like the past, New Juvenile, Chinese Juvenile and Little Trick are quite not bad, and there seems to be a great need for such publications at present. We are not to neglect the spiritual food for children, and relying on Wartime Children alone I think is not enough."

From a semiotic perspective, an important symbol conveyed by this approach of the Salvation Journal is its higher pro-people nature. The explicit meaning of these symbols is the newspaper's willingness to publish the voices of the general public, the implicit meaning is the newspaper's "people-oriented" philosophy, and the highest level of ideology is that the Salvation Daily is only a small part of the national "United Front" effort, and that in order to realize the unity of the whole nation, the participation and efforts of the masses are still needed.

From the perspective of textual analysis, this approach of the Salvation Daily also breaks a "stereotype". That is, the newspaper can only publish the official voice, not the voice of the people. From the opposite logical reasoning, "Salvation Daily" is also creating a "stereotype" of the public's idea of serving the people.

## 9. Conclusion

Through a textual analysis of the typical articles in the Salvation Daily, we can summarize how the newspaper built and led the ideological field in terms of news sources, news texts, language tone, and newspaper philosophy during the war period, mainly in the following three aspects.

First, the newspaper conveyed the important symbol of "hyper-partisanship" in running the newspaper, so that it would not offend any political forces. At the same time, the "reference" of this symbol is its "objective and neutral" newspaper philosophy, which has successfully won the trust of the majority of readers, and this trust undoubtedly provides the newspaper with a solid foundation for its "united front" ideological leadership. This trust undoubtedly laid a solid foundation for the newspaper's "united front" ideological leadership. Secondly, the newspaper's "reenactment" of the war situation made it possible to convey the meaning it wanted to convey to readers in a focused and prominent manner. Reports of victories, for example, were often interspersed with strong praise for our soldiers. Finally, analyzing the newspaper's coverage of our soldiers in terms of the semiotics of metaphor and metonymy, it is also clear that the newspaper is trying to lead readers to see that people are bleeding and dying for their country, and that the public should therefore pay more attention to the war and take the war as their responsibility.

Secondly, the clever setting of the tone of the article and the evocative language stimulated the "subconscious" of the readers to participate in the war. The choice of key words in the news text of "Salvation Daily" gave readers a strong sense of immersion and participation when reading the article. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, it is these keywords and the tone of the language that convey the inner meaning of the country at the moment of its survival, arousing the "subconscious" of the readers as Chinese people who want to defend their country. Again, this is a disguised expression of the "United Front" discourse of propaganda.

Third, the articles in the Salvation Daily are lively and interesting, and the colorful content of its supplements, coupled with its people-oriented philosophy, better contribute to its ideological leadership. From the textual analysis, the newspaper publishes humorous and literary articles as a way to break the "stereotype" of the public that newspapers only publish serious news. Behind the seemingly amusing content of the supplement was also a strong appeal to the public to participate in the war effort. The newspaper's voice for the masses was an important symbol of the fact that anyone could participate in the war.

Finally, this series of newspaper concepts of the Salvation Daily actually all serve as lessons for today's newspaper media. Although we are now in a time of peace, the complexities of online opinion and ideological strife are still present. In addition, the propaganda of the "United Front" and the correct leadership of ideology are crucial to solving various social problems, especially the Taiwan issue.

Therefore, at this stage or in the future, all official media can learn from the expression of "United Front" and the ideological leadership of "national unity" in the "Salvation Daily" during the war period, and contribute to the overall "United Front" work. The official media can contribute to the overall "United Front" work.

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