

A Contrastive Critical Discourse Analysis of English News Reports on 2010 Diaoyu Island Incident in Chinese, Japanese and American Newspapers

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Abstract: The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to reveal how ideologies influence the discourse, and vice versa by studying the linguistic characteristics of the discourse and the specific social, economic, political and historical contexts the discourse itself is based on. As a type of mass media discourse, news plays a more and more important role in the society. It not only conveys the information to the readers, but also influences the attitudes and concepts of the readers by the embedded ideologies. Thus, news discourses evoke much interest of critical linguistics. The present study selects the news reports on the 2010 Diaoyu Islands incident from three newspapers: China Daily, The Japan Times and The New York Times. Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Systematic Functional Grammar, the present thesis conducts a contrastive critical analysis of news reports in three stages. In response to the research questions, this study has obtained the following findings: The different linguistic features are shown in the three newspapers towards the report on the same event. In the lexical choices, the three newspapers report differently from three perspectives, i.e., the description of the incident location, the description of the cause of the incident and the naming of the incident. In the distribution of the processes, verbal process takes the highest percentage both in China Daily and The Japan Times, while material process takes the highest percentage in The New York Times. In the distribution of the news sources, the quotation from its own authorities takes the highest percentage both in China Daily and The Japan Times, while the quotation from all walks of Japan takes the highest percentage in The New York Times. Besides that, news sources from Chinese experts and scholars in China Daily take a high proportion; and a large number of news sources from American authorities are detected in The Japan Times. Different linguistic features reflect different ideologies embedded in the three newspapers. And the main reason for that is the difference of politics, history and culture existing in the three countries. Accordingly, news discourse, especially political news discourse could not only reflect the dominant ideology, but also serve to convey the ideology to influence or even change the reader's understanding of the events reported in the newspapers.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, three-dimensional model, ideology, Diaoyu Island incident

1. Introduction

News is usually regarded as the unbiased recording of the facts. However, as Fowler (1991, p.12) argued, news is a practice, a product of social and political world on which it reports, and news reflects and shapes the prevailing values of a society in specific economic, political and historical contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) researches how underlying ideologies are embedded in linguistic structures such as lexical choices and syntax. News discourses, especially political discourses are socially and culturally constructed. Due to the close relationships with society and politics, political discourses are unavoidably influenced by the dominant ideologies and they are used as important and crucial instruments to spread the political ideologies. That's the reason why political discourses worth deep-going analysis from the perspective of CDA.

News reports on 2010 Diaoyu Island Incident are typical political news reports. The incident had once aroused worldwide attention and abundant media coverage in various countries, especially China, Japan and the United States. This thesis makes a contrastive critical analysis of the news reports from three different countries to reveal different ideologies embedded in the newspapers.

The research questions of the present study are presented as follow:

(1) Are there any differences of linguistic features among the three newspapers towards the reports ? If yes, what are they?

- (2) How are different ideologies embedded in the news reports from the three newspapers?
- (3) Why do the differences of the ideologies exist in the three newspapers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous studies of news discourse from CDA

In the past thirty years, numerous scholars and linguists devoted their efforts to the development of CDA. They have conducted the application of CDA on various texts, among which news discourse have always been one focus. As for media, Kress concentrates on the “political economy” of representational media. He tries to analyze how different societies value different modes of communication, and how these different modes of representation are used by the various societies. Fowler argues that language is anything but neutral; any forms of language choices convey different ideological meanings. He involves in functional linguistics while analyzing media language. He is interested in researching the use of the nominalization and passive forms, the transitivity of sentences and the impact of modality. Fairclough is among the first who use the term of CDA. His three-dimensional model is adopted by many scholars as the theoretical framework in many studies. He works extensively on news discourses, researching the interrelationship between ideology and language and giving the place of language in society. Van Dijk proposes a cognitive model for CDA and interprets the text by the subjects in a psychological perspective. He focuses on the relations of language, ideology and power in news discourse as well as the research of political discourse and racism.

In China, the systematic studies of the media discourse started from 1980s. Xin Bin, a prominent figure in CDA, points out that the comparative study of news discourse is effective. He (2006) makes a comparative analysis of news sources and modes of speech reporting in *China Daily* and *The New York Times*. Chen Zhongzhu is another pioneer in CDA. He adopts Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar to examine the transitivity, transformation, modality and theme while conducting discourse analysis of two news reports. Ji Yuhua (2001), makes an analysis of the headlines of four Chinese newspaper reports (one published in Mainland China and three in Hong Kong) on a conference on March 19, 1999, in the White House where President Clinton answered the questions concerning whether Chinese scientists were involved in espionage of American military nuclear technology. Ren Fang (2002), applying Hodge and Kress’s syntagmatic models (Hodge & Kress, 1979), analyzes a series of news discourse concerning the ‘Sino-US plane collision’ event from *New York Times* and *China Daily*.

From the above review, we can see that CDA is a transdisciplinary theory. News discourses are good examples for analyzing, and they are rich resources to be examined, but the news samples selected by the previous researchers are always limited to one or two newspapers. This study will do a contrastive CDA of the news reports about the same event on three different mainstream newspapers respectively from China, Japan and America.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation

2.2.1. Fairclough’s three-dimensional model

Critical discourse analysis regards discourse as a form of “social practice”. It implies a dialectical relationship between the social structure and a particular discursive event. Based on the above assumption, Fairclough (1992a) produced three dimensional model for analyzing discourses. He argues that there are three dimensions or facets in each discursive event: (a) Language text (description) (b) Discourse practice (interpretation). (c) Social practice (explanation).

The first dimension of the framework is description. In the description stage, linguistic features of the text are explored from the vocabulary, the grammar, the cohesion and the textual structures. The second dimension is interpretation. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction-with treating the text as a resource in the process of interpretation and as the product of a process of production. The interpreter should investigate the intertextual relationship between utterances, genres, discourses and texts, and the institutional setting also should be analyzed. The third dimension is explanation, which is discourse-as-social practice. At this stage, the discourse is regarded as the social practice. That is to say, discourse is the socially and historically situated mode of action. Different levels of the social organization will be referred to in analyzing the discourse event as social practice.

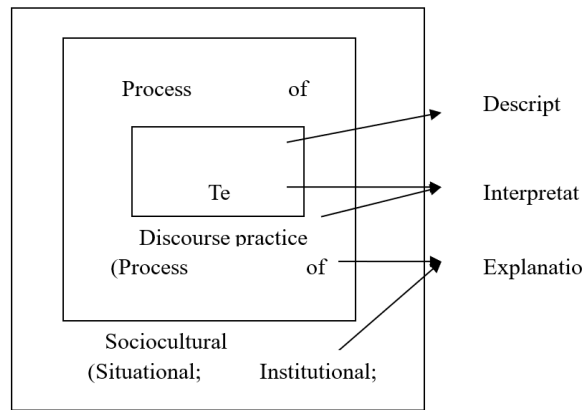


Figure 1 Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Fairclough, 1992a, p.73)

2.2.2. Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar

In Halliday's opinion (1994), language serves three metafunctions and he identifies them as ideational function; interpersonal function and the textual function. Each of these functions is concerned with one aspect of the world. The ideational function uses language to express the speaker's own experience, both of his external world and his inner world. It is valuable for Critical Discourse Analysis, since the words in discourse are the primary element to be investigated. According to SFG, transitivity is the key concept of ideational structure, through which the ideational meaning is mainly realized. The interpersonal function is concerned with the interaction between the addresser and addressee in the discourse situation and the addressee's attitude toward what he or she speaks or writes about. The third function of the language is textual function. Textual meaning is relevant to the context, both the preceding and following text, and the context of situation. The textual function of the clause is that of constructing a message.

3. Data and Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

On 7 September 2010, two Japanese Coast Guard patrol boats collided with a Chinese fishing trawler in disputed waters near the islands. Collisions occurred after the Japanese Coast Guard ordered the fishing trawler to leave the disputed area. After the collisions, Japan coast guard boarded the Chinese trawler and arrested the trawler captain Zhan Qixiong and other 14 crew members. The Japanese held the captain, Zhan Qixiong until September 24. The news reports which are chosen as the data of the present study cover the whole process from the arrest of Captain Zhan Qixiong to his release after the seventeen days of detention. In order to guarantee the objectiveness of the research, nearly all the news reports about the incident with the time from 7th September, 2010 to 26th September, 2010 from *China Daily*, *The New York Times*, and *The Japan Times* are collected as the corpus. Thirty eight news reports are identified from the corpora and put into three groups.

3.2. Research method

In the present study, the author combines qualitative and quantitative researches as research methodology. With qualitative method, we use the analytical instruments such as, classification, transitivity to investigate differences of the linguistic features in the reports on the incident and also to analyze how different ideologies are embedded in the three newspapers. With quantitative method, the amount and percentage of different processes, the percentage of different news sources in the three newspapers are shown in tables and figures. The conclusions of the present study are based both upon qualitative and quantitative results.

3.3. Procedures of the study

The 38 selected news reports in the three newspapers are contrastively analyzed in three stages by conducting Fairclough's three-dimensional modal as the framework. Some analytical instruments, based on Halliday's systematic-functional grammar are used to investigate the linguistic features in the three

newspapers. At the description stage, the lexical classifications in the three newspapers are firstly analyzed from three perspectives: descriptions of the incident location, descriptions of the cause of the incident as well as the naming of the incident. After that, transitivity in the three newspapers are contrastively analyzed. At the interpretation stage, news sources of the selected news reports are analyzed. We could find the answers to the first two research questions of the present study, according to the analysis results both from the description stage and interpretation stage. At the explanation stage, the author tries to analyze the reasons of the existence of different ideologies in the three newspapers from two perspectives: institutional context and situational context.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Description stage

4.1.1. Classification

As an essential tool for CDA, lexical classification is very important, which is mainly realized through the choices of vocabulary. Vocabulary not only sorts out our experience of the world in general terms, but also distinguishes various classes of concept. Thus the ways the news reporters choose to build the representation of the reality reflect their attitudes towards the event or person being described and inevitably impose different impressions on the readers.

In the three groups of samples, the three newspapers obviously represent different positions and attitudes of the three groups of news reporters in China, Japan and the United States. There are striking differences in the descriptions of the incident location, the descriptions of the cause of the incident and the naming of the incident, which are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1 Descriptions of the incident location

China Daily	The Japan Times	The New York Times
waters off China's Diaoyu Islands	12km north of one of the Senkaku islets in the East China Sea	disputed waters
traditional fishing area around Diaoyu Islands	Japan's territorial waters	near disputed islands
	Japanese-claimed territorial waters	around the Senkaku or Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea
	near the disputed Senkaku Islands	

There are sharp contrasts in describing the incident location among the three newspapers. The two expressions in *China Daily* show Chinese reporters' attitude: Diaoyu Islands belong to China; Chinese fishing boat has the right to operate fishing in the water area off Diaoyu Islands. But, in *The Japan Times*, expressions like "Japan's territorial waters" and "Japanese-claimed territorial waters" show the opposing attitude taken by Japanese news reporters, indicating that Chinese fishing boat intrudes into Japan's territorial waters and illegally operates fishing in Japan's territorial waters. Japan's interception of Chinese fishing boat and detention of the captain are legal actions. As the third party of the incident, expressions in *The New York Times* like "disputed waters" and "disputed islands" show that America tries to keep neutral and avoid touching the sensitive topic of the sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands.

Different positions taken by the three newspapers are evidenced in their descriptions of the cause of the incident, which is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Descriptions of the cause of the incident

China Daily	The Japan Times	The New York Times
Two Japanese patrol boats collided with the Chinese trawler.	A Chinese fishing boat that deliberately hit two Japan Coast Guard patrol ships	The Chinese boat collided with the patrol vessels on Sept.7 after ignoring warnings to leave waters near the disputed islands and refusing to stop for inspection.
	A Chinese boat deliberately rammed two coast guard vessels.	
	Authorities suspect him of deliberately causing his vessel to collide with one of the patrol boats.	

Striking differences in the description of the cause of the accident are shown in Table 2. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the verb "collide" means that to hit something or someone that is moving in a different direction from you. It's a neutral term. While in *The Japan Times*, negative expressions "deliberately hit", "deliberately rammed" and "deliberately causing...to collide with" are used to express Japan's protest to China's provocative action towards Japan patrol boat. Those derogatory terms did not only create a bad international image of China, but also appeal the readers to

condemn China for stirring up the ship incident, and to show sympathy to Japan for being the victim of the incident. Although as the third party of the incident, American media is not as neutral as it is regarded in expressing which one should take the responsibility of the incident. In *The New York Times*, negative expressions such as “ignoring warnings” and “refusing to stop for inspection” are also used by the news reporter to make excuse for Japan’s interception of Chinese fishing boat and detention of the boat captain.

4.1.2. Transitivity

Transitivity is one of the determinant parts of the ideational metafunction. It shows how language users’ mental pictures of reality are encoded in language and how their experience of the world is accounted for. Thus transitivity can disclose the language user’s motivation and intention. There are six types of processes in transitivity system. They are material processes, verbal processes, mental processes, relational processes, behavioral processes and existential processes.

Table 3 Distributions of the process in the three newspapers

Processes type	CD		JP		NYT	
	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Material	80	44.45%	93	43.26%	71	47.33%
Verbal	91	50.56%	106	49.30%	59	39.33%
Relational	6	3.33%	7	3.26%	15	10%
Mental	0	0	5	2.33%	4	2.67%
Behavioral	2	1.11%	3	1.40%	0	0
Existential	1	0.56%	1	0.47%	1	0.67%
total	180	100%	215	100%	150	100%

The quantitative statistic research in Table 3 shows two features. On the one hand, material processes, verbal processes take up great percentage in all the three newspapers. On the other hand, *The New York Times* is a little different from *China Daily* and *The Japan Times*. In both *China Daily* and *The Japan Times*, verbal process takes the highest percentage. While in *The New York Times*, material process takes the highest percentage, and relational process also take a relatively high percentage with 10%. Considering the high percentage taken by material process, verbal process and relational process, it’s very necessary to analyze the three types of process in detail.

After analyzing the data, it is found that material process takes a high percentage (92%) among the six processes in the news headlines of the selected news reports. Thus, the following sections will focus on the material processes in headlines of the news samples.

1) Material process

According to Halliday, material processes are the process of “doing”. They express the notion that some entity does something-which can be done to some other entity (Halliday, 2000). News discourses report what is happening or what happened and the reporting on any event can not be a vacuum of material processes. Actually ideology is more likely covered by material processes. The “Actor” and the “Goal” are the two participants in the material process. The choices of the “Actor” are ideologically significant.

After the data analysis, we found out two main actors or goals in the news headlines of the three newspapers. They are “China” and “Japan”.

Table 4 Analysis of the material process with China as Actor

N	Source	Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance
1	CD	Wen	will not meet	Japan PM	
2	CD	0	Protest	Over captain’s arrest	
3	CD	China	beefs up	its offshore law enforcement	
4	JT	China	delays	gas talks	over collision
5	JT	China	increases	pressure on Japan	over ship collision
6	JT	Beijing	cancel	visit by young Japanese	on eve of departure
7	JT	China	cancel	politician’s visit	after ship incident
8	NYT	China	forces	Japan	to release boat captain
9	NYT	China	arrest	four Japanese	amid tensions
10	NYT	China	takes	a sharper tone	in dispute with Japan

As can be seen from Table 4, the actors involving China take up a high percentage in all the three

newspapers.

In the reports from *China Daily*, the verb “*protest*” reveals Chinese people’s dissatisfaction with Japan’s act. The expression “*beefs up*” shows that China will take further action to defend its sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands and the rights and interests of China’s citizens. In the reports from *The Japan Times*, words such as “*delays*”, “*increase pressure*” and “*cancel*” leave the reader an impression that China is overreacted in dealing with the incident. Compared with Japan’s call for calm, these words are inclined to arouse the dissatisfaction among Japanese people and make them think that China is a “bad neighbor”. In the reports from *The New York Times*, the verb “*force*”, which means “to make someone do something they do not want to do” in Longman dictionary of contemporary English is used. It has the connotation that is being compelled without any compromise, which makes reader believe that China is aggressive. And what’s more, “*arrest*” and “*sharper tone*” also give a bad impression of China on the readers and remind them of the “China threat theory”.

Table 5 Analysis of the material process with Japan as Actor

N	Source	Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance
1	CD	Japan	must make	wise resolution	
2	JT	Maehara	inspects	boats	on Ishigaki
3	JT	Maehara	gets tough on	unilateral drilling	in disputed area
4	JT	Foreign Ministry	rejects	Beijing’s demands	as ‘groundless’
5	NYT	Japan	sets free	members of Chinese fishing crew	
6	NYT	Japan	retreats	with release of Chinese boat captain	

As can be seen from Table 5, the actors with Japan in *The Japan Times* take up higher percentage than *China Daily* and *The Now York Times*. In the reports from *China Daily*, China warns Japan to make “wise political resolution” to release the captain arrested. Japan’s illegal detention of Chinese captain has given rise to the growing tension between the two countries. China’s strong warning expresses that the future bilateral ties between China and Japan depend on Japan’s resolution to solve the dispute. “*Must*” emphasizes china’s staunch will and determination to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the reports from *The Japan Times*, the newly appointed foreign minister Maehara Seiji, who plays a very important role in the changes of Japan’s attitude toward China, was mentioned repeatedly in the news headlines. As a hawk, Maehara Seiji is tough on China. Expressions like “*Gets tough on*” and “*rejects*” also prove his toughness on China. The repeated mention of the hawkish representative of Japanese government corresponds with the standpoint of Japan’s media. At least, Japanese news reporters give the hawk more chances to propaganda his toughness on China. In the reports from *The Now York Times*, Japan’s “*sets free*” and “*retreat*” are in sharp contrast to China’s “*force*”, “*arrest*” and “*take sharper tone*”. The striking contrast gives the reader this kind of assumption: China steps up its intimidation, Japan gives in under China’s threat.

2) Verbal process

Table 4 shows that verbal process takes up a large proportion in the three newspapers with a respective percentage of 50.56% in *China Daily*, 49.30% in *The Japan Times* and 39.33% in *The New York Times*.

The large portion of the verbal process in the three newspapers is firstly determined by the field of political news reports. In the field of political news events, state leaders, government officials as well as experts and scholars are involved inevitably and their comments and remarks on the event are the essential part in the dealing with the event. In addition, the large portion of the verbal process is determined by the tenor of the news discourses. During the process of the news production, the news reporters try to impress the readers with the authenticity and objectivity of the information in the news reports, and quoting remarks and comments of the authority and the experts in the news reports in the most popular method to achieve the effect.

Verbal process, according to Halliday is the process of “saying”, which should be interpreted in a broad sense. Sayer, the person who speaks, is the most important participant in verbal process. In addition to the Sayer, Receiver, Target and Verbiage are the other three participants in verbal process. The “Receiver” is the one to whom the saying is directed. The Target is the entity that is addressed and the Verbiage is what is said. Verbal process is similar to the two parameters of discourse presentation – source and mode. Different Verbal verbs will convey different ideologies. The following verbal processes in the three newspapers express the similar meaning; however, different ideologies are embedded in the using of different Verbal verb.

Example in *China Daily*:

(1) Premier Wen Jiabao *warned* of further action against Japan if it does not release the illegal detained Chinese fishing trawler captain, in the highest-level reaction yet from Beijing. (*China Daily*, Sept. 23, 2010)

Example in *The Japan Times*:

(2) Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has taken a hard-line stance on the issue and *threatened* to take action if Japan did not immediately release the captain. (*The Japan Times*, Sept. 25 2010)

Examples in *The New York Times*:

(3) China *orders* release of boat captain by Japan. (*The New York Times*, Sept. 11, 2010)

(4) Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao *strongly urged* Japan to immediately and unconditionally release from custody the captain of a Chinese trawler, *threatening* further action if Japan refuses. (*The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 2010)

From the above examples, we observed that the verbal process in *China Daily* used the Verbal verb “warn”, while the verbal processes in *The Japan Times* and *The New York Times* used the Verbal verb “threaten” and “order”. *China Daily* used “warn” to express China’s stance will to ask for the release of the detained captain. In *The Japan Times*, the news reporter used “threaten” to express Japan’s discontent with the Chinese government. In *The New York Times*, “threaten” and “order” are used to emphasize China’s harshness, which demonize China’s international image.

3) Relational process

Relational processes are also relatively prominent in the three newspapers, especially in *The New York Times*, judging from the table of the distributions of the process. Relational process are those of ‘being’, which are the representation of the relations among things. Relational process can transfer an occasional action into a stable or permanent state. Therefore, it represents the statement of reality. Examples will be shown as follows:

Examples in *China Daily*:

(5) China has the indisputable sovereign rights over the Diaoyu Islands and adjacent islets. (*China Daily*, Sept. 9, 2010)

The relational process of example (5) aims to state a reality and inform to the whole world that Diaoyu Islands are China’s territory. This relational process also indirectly protests Japan’s interception of the Chinese fishing boat and detention of the boat captain, which is the open defiance to China’s territorial integrity.

Examples in *The Japan Times*:

(6) The Senkaku Islands are part of the city of Ishigaki in Okinawa Prefecture. (*The Japan Times*, Sept. 12, 2010)

The relational process of example (6) demonstrates Japan’s opinion and stance toward the sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands: Diaoyu Islands are controlled by Japan and they are part of Japan’s territory.

Examples in *The New York Times*:

(7) Territorial disputes are common in Asian waters, with some of the most nettlesome surrounding islands chains between China, Japan, Vietnam and the Koreans. (*The New York Times*, Sept. 8, 2010)

(8) Asserting Chinese sovereignty over borderlands in contention—everywhere from Tibet to Taiwan to the South China Sea—has long been the top priority for Chinese nationalists. (*The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 2010)

In the relational process of example (7), the news reporter used “Common” to indicate that it is not peaceful in Asia and territorial disputes frequently happen among Asia countries. While in the relational process of example (8), “asserting Chinese sovereignty over borderlands in contention” and “the top priority for Chinese nationalists” give the reader a kind of implication that China’s greediness for territory is the main reason for the frequent territorial disputes in Asia and China is a threat to the peace of the Asian area.

4.2. Interpretation stage

4.2.1. News source

News source refers to someone who provides information or someone who says something which is later quoted in a news report. News reports usually consist of two parts. One is the description of the event, including some specific information about the time, the place and what happened. The other is the quotation or description of the speech, including what people said or commented. According to Xin Bin (1998, 2006), there are three types of news source in reported speech. One type is the specific source, by which the speaker’s name, profession or rank is clearly identified. Another one is the semi-identified source, by which the speaker is not clearly indicated, only with hints of the name of institutions or groups. The third one is the unidentified source, which is using vague terms such as “It is said that...”; “According to a report...”

All the source patterns in the three newspapers are examined and Table 6 is the distribution of the news source in the three newspapers.

Table 6 Distribution of news resources in the three newspapers

News Samples	Specific source	Semi-specific source	Unidentified source	Total
China Daily	95(89.62%)	6(5.67%)	5(4.71%)	106
The Japan Times	69(71.87%)	21(21.87%)	6(6.30%)	96
The New York Times	26(52.00%)	20(40.00%)	4(8.00%)	50

From Table 6, we can see that the three newspapers share something in common: specific source takes a high proportion while semi-specific source takes a relatively low proportion; unidentified source rarely appear in the news reports. The high proportion of specific source shows that the reporters intend to make the reports more trustworthy and convincing. However, difference still can be found from the table that *China Daily* quotes more specific sources than *The Japan Times* and *The New York Times*, while *The Japan Times* and *The New York Times* quote more semi-identified sources than *China Daily*. Especially for *The New York Times*, the semi-specific sources take up a percentage as high as 40%.

In order to find out the ideological implications conveyed by the three newspapers, a close examination of the news sources is necessary.

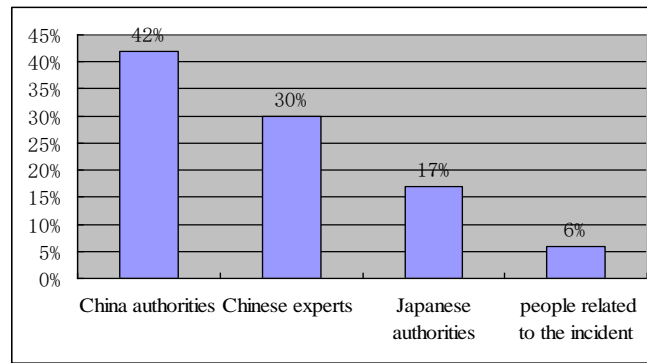


Figure 2 Distribution of news sources in the news reports from CD

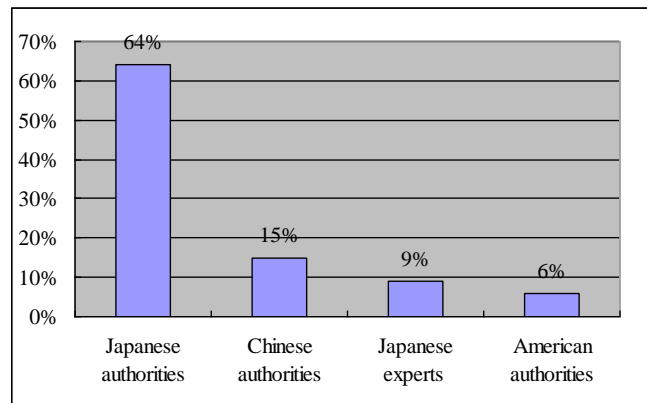


Figure 3 Distribution of news sources in the news reports from TJT

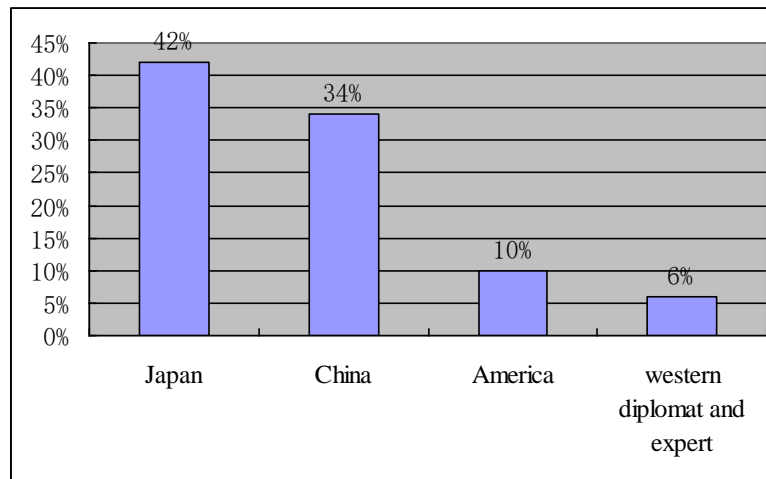


Figure 4 Distribution of news sources in the news reports from TNY

As can be seen from the three tables and the three diagrams, there are similarities and differences manifested in the choices of the news source.

Firstly, figure 2 and figure 3 share something in common, that is the news sources from their own authorities take up the highest proportion in both *China Daily* and *The Japan Times*. That's because the two news agencies are used as the main platform for the two governments to publicize their own positions and stances toward the Diaoyu Island Incident. Figure 3 shows that news sources from Japanese authorities in *The Japan Times* take a percentage as high as 64%. This high percentage shows that the news reporters give the priority to the authorities and it reports the incident more from the Japanese government's point of view. Sharp contrast is shown in figure 4. In *The New York Times*, news sources from America take up a low percentage with 10%. This interesting phenomenon can be explained by the role that America plays in the Diaoyu Island Incident. As the third party of the incident, the news agency in America mainly serves to report how things are going between China and Japan. In order to avoid involving in the disputes, American authorities and experts try to limit their participations in the incident and comments to the issue.

4.3. Explanation stage

As the discourse is the social practices, the news discourse can be seen as one of the special social practice which process institution and sociality. So, it is indispensable to analyze the contexts of the news discourse. And according to Wodak, it's impossible to understand the discursive strategies adopted without analyzing the social background against which they were formulated (Wodak, 1996, p24).

4.3.1. Institutional context

We should focus on the national right which is behind the ideas of "objectivity", "fair" and "freedom" when we observe the news media (Jin, 2008, p63). As we mentioned above, there exists a close relationship between ideology and the political discourses. The forms and content of the political news discourse could be generally abstracted to social ideologies and representations. The 38 news reports, with the same topic "2010Diaoyu Island Incident", in the present study are selected from three different newspapers. Although there is a distinct difference among the stance of the three different newspapers, the stance of the reporters and their own news organizations they work for is the same. We could regard the "stance" here as the ideology. It is believed that national security and national interests are the primary principles for the news reporting, particularly when there are disputes with foreign countries. At that time, the news reporters and the news organizations they work for will try to protect their national interests and national image. *China Daily*, *The Japan Times* and *The New York Times* are recognized as the international newspapers in the world. The three newspapers have great influence both at home and abroad. *China Daily* is recognized as the English version of *People's Daily*, which is seen as mouthpiece of Chinese government. *The Japan Times* is viewed as the window to Japan. *The New York Times* is at the top of the list of the world's fifty greatest news papers. In the present study, all the news reports from *China Daily* and *The Japan Times* share a common feature: they are reporting to protect the interests and the image of their own countries. Through analysis, it is found that *The New York Times* shows much sympathy to Japan and makes fuss about the incident to propaganda the idea of "China threat theory". The attitude of *The New York Times* toward the incident is determined by the interests of America. So,

the absolute objectivity in news reporting is impossible.

4.3.2. *Situational context*

The relationship among China, Japan and US exerts the influence on the news reports.

1) Japan and China

The Vice- Premier Deng Xiaoping successfully pushed China and Japan to agree to shelve bilateral disputes for a common development on the Diaoyu Islands issue during a visit to Japan for the signing and exchanging ceremony of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship in December 1978. The consensus became a de facto principle that China and Japan abided by in the following years.

However, Japan has time and again taken measures aiming at putting the Diaoyu Islands under its control since the 1990s. 2010 Diaoyu Islands Incident happened several days before the election of Japan's Primer Minister. In order to woo the voters, both Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan and Ichiro Ozawa, who is challenging him for the leadership of Japan's ruling party on Sep. 14, played the Chinese cards. Naoto Kan and Ichiro Ozawa have both voiced their concern about what they claimed was China's maritime expansion in a television debate Sept. 5. Pointing to Japan's disputes with China over the sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, Ozawa even claimed that the islands have never been China's territory since ancient times. Kan also said he believed that the activities by China's naval forces in the waters off Japan should require Japan's vigilance and that Tokyo should deploy self-defense forces in its southwestern islands to guard against possible threats. In their eyes, Diaoyu islands or Senkaku is part of Japanese territory and that, to them, has become a widely recognized fact among the Japanese. Guarding against China's naval activities in this maritime area therefore serves Japan's national interest. Following this logic, winning public approval on this issue has been regarded by Kan and Ozawa as an important weapon to gain votes. Both Kan and Ozawa believe that the acquisition of the Diaoyu Islands and adjacent isles, whose surrounding maritime waters are rich in resources, by a Japan that has insufficient resources, will be of great significance to Japan's maritime and resource strategy.

2) China and U.S.

Since peace and development are the theme of the current world, economic and cultural interactions between China and the United States have increased dramatically. The deepening of the cooperation and communication has served to enhance the understandings between the two countries. However, China's rapid economic development and ascension in the world have created more and more uncertainty for the developed countries, especially for the United State, the world's single-superpower. Therefore, China is regarded as a big challenge of the international status of the United States in the world and a threat to American interests. That's one of the reasons why America propagandas the idea of "China threat theory".

China's adherence to Communism and its different political system is another factor that could account for the United States' hostility towards China. There is a deep-rooted anti-communist feeling in the United States. Besides, American hegemonic culture should be taken into account in the interpretation of the ideological difference between China and the United States. The term "hegemonic" refers to a situation in which one country plays a predominant role in regulating, organizing and stabilizing the world. However, with the development of China's economy and the increasing influence of China in the word, America feels more and more uncomfortable and angry for China.

5. Conclusion

Adopting the Critical Discourse Analysis approach to the news discourse, this paper has contrastively analyzed the news reports related to the 2010 Diaoyu Island Incident from *China Daily*, *The Japan Times* and *The New York Times*. Along with Halliday's systematic functional grammar, the present study is conducted under the framework of Fairclough's three dimensional model. It is found that, although all the selected news reports are on the same event, noticeable differences are detected with respect to the classification, transitivity process, and news sources in the three newspapers. It is suggested that these lexical and syntactic choices made by these three newspapers are not arbitrary but are motivated by different underlying ideologies. The contrastive analysis conducted in the present study demonstrates that news is not objective, serious and impartial as it seems to be, and that the neutralized ideological implications and assumptions are hidden by the seemingly neutral lexical and syntactic patterns.

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