

Sino-US Trade Friction in Western and Chinese Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Jie Li

Graduate Student in School of Foreign Language, East China University of Science and Technology, Shanghai, China

Corresponding Author: Jie Li, E-mail: lijie@126.com

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ABSTRACT

Since US President Donald Trump took office, Sino-US relations have undergone a significant change. The Trump administration ignored WTO rules and made a series of allegations against China. In 2018, the trade war between China and the United States broke out, which has aroused widespread concern worldwide. In order to expose the ideology behind the media reports, taking Halliday's systemic functional grammar, Fairclough's three-dimensional model and corpus analysis as theoretical basis, this thesis conducts contrastive analysis of news reports on trade friction from China Daily, The New York Times and The Guardian, finding that China Daily always represents Chinese government's position, emphasizing bilateral consultations and peaceful resolution and establishing a positive and responsible image of a big country; The New York Times does not always stand by the side of the US government, especially of President Trump; as a third party in Sino-US trade, British mainstream medium, The Guardian, adopts a neutral attitude in most cases, but some of its reports make negative comments on China and the United States both. Therefore, through critical discourse analysis, the public can be helped to improve their sensitivity to news reports and not to be the stupid crowd.

Introduction

Research Background

Since Donald Trump's administration, an obvious shift has taken place between bilateral relations. First *American Security Strategy* released by him enlisted China and Russia as its main threats, indicating that the fast development of China has threatened US (Yang Qing 2018). Then he ignored the rules of WTO and put forward a series of false accusations of China to contain China. In March 2018, Trump administration declared the trade war and then counterattacks between two countries came up.

In western countries, the media are regarded as "the fourth power" alongside with the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power, which not only attract public's attention but also directly influence the leaders. The hidden ideology in news reports influence people's thoughts and values unconsciously. *China Daily* is the only English newspaper in China, which functions as a window to communication with other countries. *The New York Times* is an object that Americans can live without, which represents American premium newspaper and serious periodicals, having high reputation and authority in its country. While *The Guardian* is a pronoun of serious and reliable news in Britain, specializing in critical and analytic features. It can be said that these three newspapers are the most suitable representatives of their countries.

Due to great differences on political systems and ideologies, different countries have their own standpoints even to the same event. Therefore, this research conducts a contrastive critical discourse analysis of news reports from

China Daily, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* to explore their hidden attitudes towards trade disputes between China and the United States and what strategies are used to realize different ideologies.

Research Methods and Data Collection

With the help of software AntConc3.5 and reference corpus BNC BABY, this thesis will be conducted through the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Specifically, with the guidance of quantitative method, chosen news reports are classified into different categories to diagnose their instinctive linguistic features. When it comes to qualitative analysis, careful text reading and discourse analysis are required. Through comprehensive research, social background embedded in the contents is exposed.

By searching keyword “China-US trade friction”, this thesis chooses 103 pieces of related news in total -- 49 passages from *China Daily*, 20 from *The New York Times* and 34 from *The Guardian*, all published from March 2018 to March 2019. As reports on *China Daily* are relatively short, more passages are selected to achieve balance between three media. At the same time, to guarantee the quality of news, the editorial is preferred. Then three self-built corpora are established: *China Daily*-based corpus (CD Corpus), *The New York Times*-based corpus (NYT Corpus) and *The Guardian*-based corpus (TG Corpus).

Table 1.1 Tokens of Three Self-built Corpora

<i>Media</i>	<i>CD Corpus</i>	<i>NYT Corpus</i>	<i>TG corpus</i>
<i>Tokens</i>	23043	22698	22412

Literature Review

Previous Studies on Trade Frictions between China and America

Since 1990s, six large-scale trade frictions have taken place between China and America. In 2018, Donald Trump declared a new round of sections to China, arousing several counterattacks later between these two super economies. When searching subject term “Chine-US trade friction” in biggest academic database CNKI (Chinese main academic database), 1060 passages appears and related researches reached its peak in 2018. Zhu Mengnan and Cao Chunyu (2019) conduct a research on the influence that Trump’s attack brings to trade balance, financial economics and economic stability in China through new Keynesian stochastic general equilibrium model. Zhang Xue and Feng Xiaoling (2019) explore the existing problems of intellectual property protection in China and propose feasible suggestions by analyzing bilateral conflicts on intellectual property. Li Xiao (2018) explains the purpose and reason why Trump provoked the conflicts based on trade imbalance of both sides. All these studies help China better realize the essence of the conflicts. Although a large number of studies have been conducted on the friction, most focus on its political and economical influence. Few scholars have analyzed the event from the perspective of linguistics, let alone critical discourse analysis.

Previous Studies on Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), originating from 1970s, is a method of discourse analysis represented by Roger Fowler (1979) to expose the critical relation between language and ideology. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) proposed that the aim of CDA is to explore the relations between discourse and social and cultural constructions, which emphasizes the interaction of language and society. Since then, CDA has got more and more scholars’ attention.

Although with a relatively short history, CDA has developed into an important branch of modern linguistic study and interdisciplinary studies become a popular research trend. Wodak (1999) puts forward a theory of historical-discourse analysis, noting that CDA is not only an analogous practice with a series of definite rules, but also a systematic theoretical and methodological approach. Van Dijk (2008) first adopt sociology and psychology in his

discourse analysis. Then through analyzing Van Dijk's *Discourse and Knowledge* and Basil Bernstein's *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*, Chinese scholar Tian Hailong (2019) proposes that CDA, semiotics and new rhetoric can get integrated. Zhao Fan (2017) even enriches CDA with the guidance of dialectical materialism. Besides, Zhao Xuebing (2019) associates visual grammar with her discourse analysis, enriching the existing film theories. Yan Bing and Zhang Hui (2018) even uses Cap's Proximization to analyze the discourses of China, the U.S. and Britain, showing that America intends to fabricate China's aggressive image through the media while Britain does not take the neutral position. All these innovative methods contribute to the prosperity of Critical Discourse Analysis.

In addition to the researches above, corpus-based critical discourse analysis is also a mainstream research direction nowadays. Hardt-Mautner was the initiator of it. Later, Chinese scholars conduct many researches with the guidance of it. Hu Jiang (2016) builds up corpus based on news chosen from AFPS, NNS, USMC and other military new agencies to dig out hidden attitudes of western countries towards China. Pan Yanyan (2015) adopts samples involving Chinese navy on American website *Strategy Page* from 2013 to 2014 to dig out how American media influence the public's impression on Chinese navy. The application of corpus analysis in CDA enables both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Summary

In sum, most researches relating to China-US trade frictions only explore the influence to both two countries in areas such as agriculture and high-technology industry. Very little attention has been paid to linguistic field especially in linguistic area. While in CDA - related studies, increasing interdisciplinary analysis enlarges its applications and corpus linguistics makes up its previous shortcomings. However, in corpus-based CDA studies, most take two media and some even only focus on a single medium. Few analyze three countries at the same time. Therefore, this thesis attempts to make up for the deficiency of previous studies -- studying trade conflicts further by analyzing news reports from China, America and Britain mainstream media using CDA.

Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reports

Based on Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model (1997), news samples are analyzed from three perspectives in this chapter. The first part is Description, which analyzes the similarity and differences of the reports from lexical choice, transitivity and modality based on Halliday's systemic functional grammar. Then Interpretation follows including news resources and reporting mode. The third part discusses the environment of news sample including political and economic contexts to explore the hidden ideologies.

Description

Lexical Choice

Based on the brief introduction of theoretical foundation mentioned in the chapter above, ideational function is an essential part and lexical choice is a significant tool in practical discourse analysis. Through different choices of words, public media can realize the classification of events and hide their own political ideology into the texts (Xin Bin 2000). Therefore, it's necessary to analyze the words in news to discover the underlying attitudes and opinions.

The word frequency is the most fundamental statistical approach of corpus retrieval. With the reference of corpus BNC BABY and AntConc 3.5, top 30 keywords are selected, which are showed on the list below.

Table 3.1 Top 30 Frequently Used Words in Self-built Corpora

MEDIA	<i>China Daily</i>		<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>The Guardian</i>	
Rank	Frequency	Keyword	Frequency	Keyword	Frequency	Keyword
1	451	China	380	China	322	China
2	427	us	186	trump	257	trade
3	318	trade	184	Chinese	346	us
4	118	trump	157	tariffs	179	trump
5	97	Chinese	214	trade	164	Chinese
6	67	tariffs	157	American	140	tariffs
7	64	Beijing	108	states	68	beijing
8	85	Washington	58	Beijing	72	bn
9	82	administration	109	united	40	Huawei
10	78	sides	61	administration	51	xi
11	72	relations	62	U.	58	goods
12	79	talks	51	goods	54	markets
13	39	bilateral	43	xi	41	Donald
14	49	global	74	companies	44	global
15	32	frictions	69	president	62	president
16	58	countries	78	war	53	talks
17	38	Donald	61	economic	70	war
18	66	daily	35	imports	23	jinping
19	45	interests	163	Mr	33	imports
20	29	tariff	22	soybeans	26	tariff
21	50	states	43	products	37	Washington
22	33	differences	29	percent	39	technology
23	28	economies	47	officials	40	economy
24	45	economy	43	economy	18	Meng
25	42	billion	29	consumers	35	products
26	19	Pompeo	39	billion	21	intellectual
27	24	Resolve	28	global	30	sides

28	26	Percent	20	tariff	21	economies
29	52	president	34	technology	54	deal
30	27	import	22	manufacturing	14	soya

From the table above, we can conclude that: participants of the trade friction are the main focus as words “China”, “Chinese”, “Xi”, “US”, “Trump” and the like are used most frequently. Specific event “trade” and “tariff” are also at top. “Beijing” and “Washington” are mentioned frequently because capital city is always a metaphor of the country. “Administration” ranks top 10 both in CD Corpus and NYT Corpus, demonstrating their special attention to leaders and governments’ reactions towards the friction.

Differences between these three media are also obvious. “Sides”, “talks” and “relations” are often used by CD but are seldom mentioned by NYT, showing that Chinese media pays more attention on problem solving and addresses the importance of bilateral negotiation and peace talk. China is used to adopting word “friction” to describe the dispute while NYT prefers “war”, demonstrating their different definitions towards the event: America seems more aggressive and solid while China does not think it has escalated as seriously as a war. Being an outsider of this event, *The Guardian* tries to cover the news from a big picture by choosing the words “goods” and “markets” more frequently. Besides, “Global” is both emphasized by Chinese and British media but NYT mentions it less often, indicating these three media’s different reporting perspectives. By frequently using “soya” and “soybeans”-- the main production levied heavy tariffs on, America and Britain want to stress the negative effects in agriculture brought by trade friction.

Table 3.2 Examples of Concordance of the Word “China” in Corpus

MEDIA	N	Concordance Lines
CD	1	China “advocates and supports the multilateral trading system.
	2	One can continue assuming that relations between China and the United States will not worsen beyond a certain point because their....
	3	China appears confident of promoting its path of socialism with Chinese characteristics...
	4	The white paper says in unambiguous terms that China is willing to restart trade talks with the US
	5	The world’s most powerful economy has used its all-around influence to pressure China to toe the line, forcing China to fight back to safeguard...
	6	China will firmly defend its legitimate rights....
NYT	7	The latest U.S. measures against China carry a sense of containment, which purportedly is commonplace among U.S. politicians..
	8	Both the ECB and BOE are assuming scenarios in which America raises tariffs on China and Europe, with China and Europe retaliating.
	9	The U.S. Navy...that has assured China ’s trading partners there that China ’s economic domination wouldn’t result in China ’s geopolitical domination over them.....

	10	As the united states and China prepare to resume fractious trade talks this week,...
TG	11	Wang presented China as upholding multilateral institutions drawing an implicit contrast with Trump’s anti-globalist..
	12	Portrays China as champion of ...
	13	Mr. Trump spoke of China “raping” the US...
	14	China and the US reached a consensus in principle on key issues during the talks

Concordance is one of basic tools of corpus analysis. The table above is the examples chosen from the concordance lines of “China”, which has highest frequency in these three media in common.

Through analysis, it’s obvious that in *China Daily*, the phrase “China and the United States” in Example 2 appears frequently in the corpus, indicating that China always emphasizes bilateral efforts are needed to release the current conflicts and no one can survive from the trade war in perfect condition. “China ‘advocates and supports’” in Example 1, “China appears confident of promoting” in Example 3, “China is willing to restart talks” in Example 4 and the like are aimed at portraying China positively -- open to global trade and circulation and willing to solve the problems bravely. “To pressure China” and “forcing China” in Example 5 indicate that China is the victim of the dispute. 22 times’ occurrence of “China will” like Example 6 indicates China’s position and political attitude -- willing to solve the problems through peace talk but never fear to fight for its legitimate rights.

In NYT Corpus, “China” always appears with prepositions such as “against” in Example 7 and “on” in Example 8, introducing the measures America takes on China in most cases. “China’s economic domination” and “China has long wiggled out of commitments” in Example 9 portray a negative image of China to the audience. From the other side, it indicates its fear to the fast speed of China’s development, making excuses to slander China.

When it comes to *The Guardian*, reporters always adopt other people’s words especially those who have higher political positions in China and America such as Example 11, 12 and 13 to show papers’ impartiality on purpose. Besides, “China and the US” like in Example 14 are also mentioned many times, focusing on the participants.

Transitivity

Halliday (2000) mentions in his work that the main function of transitivity is to express what people see and what people do in real life through the description of the process. The choices of different processes reflect different cultural, political and ideological meanings (Xin Bin 1998).

As three self-built corpora are too large to analyze in details, nine passages are carefully chosen to conduct transitivity analysis -- three from each newspaper respectively, which are added on the appendix. Based on chosen samples, the distribution of six process are showed as follows:

Table 3.3 Distribution of the Six Processes in the Corpora

News		Material Process	Mental Processes	Relational Process	Verbal Process	Behavioral Process	Existential Process	Total
CD	1	40	4	7	5	0	1	57
	2	34	3	11	4	0	3	55

	3	30	5	17	2	0	3	57
NYT	4	42	9	23	1	2	2	79
	5	60	7	16	17	1	5	106
	6	57	8	13	15	2	0	95
TG	7	39	14	17	6	0	1	77
	8	30	2	9	16	0	0	57
	9	63	18	19	15	4	6	125
<i>Total</i>		395	70	132	81	9	21	708
<i>Percentage</i>		55.79%	9.89%	18.64%	11.44%	1.27%	2.97%	100%

The table above indicates six processes obviously. In these 9 samples, material process accounts for 55.79%, half of all. The verbal process and relational process take up 11.44% and 18.64% respectively. The percentage of mental process is relatively low -- 9.89%, while behavioral process and existential process have the lowest proportion. No matter which medium, material process is always emphasized, showing reports' willingness to make the news more objective and impartial. As martial process, mental process, relational process and verbal process appear more often, the following analysis is mainly based on that.

Material Process

Material process is the process of happening or the process of being acted. The most important participators are performer and receiver of the action. Its high frequency represents the event itself and the process of event is the focus of attention. Although it seems that reporter tries his or her best to cover without impartiality, the hidden ideology and attitude can also be dug out.

Table 3.4 Examples of Material Processes in Chosen News

<i>Media</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sentence</i>
CD	1	That is why China's response toward the US has always remained measured and well reasoned, not only in face of US imposing hefty tariffs on increasing amounts of Chinese goods, but also when constantly provoked on Taiwan or in the South China Sea. (News 2)
	2	Should there be any other aspirations, such as taking advantage of the trade spat to throttle Chinese growth, then an agreement is unlikely to be reached. (News 3)
	3	The White House appears optimistic about taking home a good deal from Buenos Aires based on the belief the US economy is in better shape to weather a long trade war than China's, and it seems to be counting on this to squeeze concessions from China. (News 3)

NYT	4	Because the U.S. runs a trade deficit, we're losers, and anything that reduces that trade deficit is good.(News 4)
TG	5	But in practice, he has displayed great weakness in dealing with other countries by fawning over autocrats like Mr. Xi and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. (News 6)
	6	Xi claimed China had entered a “new round of high-level opening up” but did not make any concrete concessions likely to satisfy the White House. (News 8)

In Example 1, appearance of subject China and disappearance of object US puts China at a low position -- victim. Originally, “provoke” means annoying someone so that they react in an angry way. Here the reporters choose this word to describe China’s attitude towards America’s conspiracy against Taiwan and South China Sea problem -- the reaction of China is based on self-defense, creating a positive image of China. “Throttle” in Example 2 is to kill someone by holding throat very tightly so that they cannot breathe, describing US’s hostility towards China -- through the trade conflicts, America wants to oppress China’s development seriously to realize its hegemony. “Squeeze” implies that the purpose of Trump cannot be realized easily and China will not give in easily as it is now powerful enough to confront with US. Besides, it’s not difficult to find that *China Daily* is trying to build up a positive image of China and portrays US as an aggressor through the material process.

When it comes to Example 4, “run” means making something operate, implying that someone initiates something has the power to control the whole process. Here it is adopted to satirize Trump’s administration that he thought whoever sells more wins, showing that American media do not always stand by the side of their president.

The Guardian uses “display” in Example 5 to satirize Trump, who boosted him as a tough image, actually showing his weakness to his “enemy” proudly. “Satisfy” means making somebody pleased by doing or giving what they want. In Example 6, the performer of this action is China, putting China at a comparatively weaker position -- China needs to make compromise to please America. Although American is the super power, *The Guardian* has no obvious partiality towards it. But from the chosen texts, it’s difficult to predict its attitude towards China.

Mental Process

Mental process describes the process of sensing. Machin and Mayr (2012) divides it into three parts: cognition process, affective process and perception process. Compared with cognition process and perception process, affective process implies the hidden ideology more obviously. “Senser”and “Phenomenon” are the two participators.

Table 3.5 Examples of Mental Processes in Chosen News

<i>MEDIA</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SENTENCE</i>
CD	1	While touting the blow its trade war has dealt to industries in China, the White House would be deceiving itself by ignoring the calls from nearly 150 US business groups on Tuesday urging the president to reach a deal in Argentina. (News 1)
NYT	2	Mr. Trump prides himself on being tough, especially on foreigners who he argues have been taking advantage of the United States. (News 6)
TG	3	Few believe that the fragile ceasefire will lead to lasting harmony. (News 9)

In Example 1, *China Daily* takes the word “deceive” to describe White House’s ignorance towards the needs and opinions from American business groups, showing that imposing tariffs on Chinese products brings harms to both countries and Trump’s administration did not get support from every walk of life in America. Besides, it satirizes that trade conflict provoked by Trump is just a monodrama. The similar usage appears in Example 2 -- “pride”. Only Trump is satisfied with his policies and decisions and his actions of “protecting” America demonstrate his toughness and wisdom in his own eyes. “Believe” literally means being sure that something is true. In News 9 chosen from *The Guardian*, it is used to describe few people’s attitude, indicating that fragile ceasefire has no possibility to result in long-term harmony from the bottom of heart.

Relational process

Relational process is the process of being and the relations between participants. It can be divided into two parts: attributive process and identifying process. The former takes “be” as the tool to express the process while the later prefers “have”.

Table 3.6 Examples of Relational Processes in Chosen News

<i>Media</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sentence</i>
CD	1	While Washington considers that the US is in a race with China for technological leadership, a change of perspective would allow it to see that cooperating in high-tech would make the cake bigger for both. (News 1)
	2	It has been Beijing's consistent position to try and resolve the problems in China-US relations (News 1)
NYT	3	An endless fight would be bad for both countries. These are just temporary measures.” (News 5)
	4	Tariffs are blunt tools that are far less effective than Mr. Trump realizes. (News 6)
TG	5	American and Chinese businesses and consumers will not be the only ones to pay for this conflict. (News 7)
	6	The Chinese economy is a sea , not a pond. Storms can overturn a pond, but never a sea.” (News 9)

In Example 1, the reporter retells Washington’s opinion -- Sino-US trade friction is a just race between these two powers. In fact, the word “race” is based on equality and fairness while the friction is far from that. Here *China Daily* adopts this word to show America’s buck-passing. Example 5 uses “will not be the only” to indicate the enormous harm the trade war brings to the global economy. “Blunt tools” is used to describe that only levying tariffs cannot change the trade deficits effectively, satirizing Mr. Trump’s short-sightedness in some way. However, not all relational processes conceal reporters’ ideology, some of which just describe the truth such as Example 2, 3 and 6.

Verbal process

Verbal process is the process of information interchange. Sayer, receiver and verbiage are the participants of it. In news reports, reporters prefer to quote those words similar to their opinions and attitudes to increase the authority and credibility.

Table 3.7 Examples of Verbal Processes in Chosen News

Media	N	Sentence
CD	1	US Vice-President Mike Pence opened fire on China in a blustering speech that scatter shot groundless accusations against China (News 2)
NYT	2	China’s state-controlled news media echoed the sentiment. (News 5)
	3	His administration argues that these decisions are meant to force President Xi Jinping of China to begin to play by the rules other major economies follow (News 6)
TG	4	... evidence mounting of the impact of the trade war between the world’s two largest economies, Donald Trump has boasted of “big progress” towards a potential deal. (News 10)
	5	Xi claimed China had entered a “new round of high-level opening up” but did not make any concrete concessions likely to satisfy the White House. (News 8)

“Scatter shot” in Example 1 denotes something that is broad but random and haphazard in its range. The accusations American posed on China is unreasonable and groundless. Here *China Daily* uses it precisely to describe US vice-president’s groundless speech and stresses America’s provocation.

“Argue” from News 6 means having different stances and opinions. Actually, Trump’s administration does not get fully approved and agreed. *The New York Times* chooses it to portray US government a barbarous image, implying that American media may not always approve of its leader.

“Boast” is to talk too proudly about your achievement or possessions. In Example 4, it is used to describe Donald Trump, satirizing his self-containment. While “Claim” in Example 5 is used to say that something is true through it has not been proved which is used to describe Xi’s words that China had entered a new round of high-level opening up, indicating their distrust towards China.

Modality Analysis

Modality is also an effective way to express interpersonal meaning, which can help express one’s wills, persuade others to take responsibility or make a judgement to the event (Fowler 1979). Through using different modal verbs, one's hidden attitude can also be found.

There are about 10 modal verbs to express modal meanings including affirmative meaning and negative meaning, which are divided into three levels--low, median and high according to their values of modality by Halliday (2004:149). The following analysis is based on that.

Table 3.8 Classification of Modal Verbs

	LOW	MEDIAN	HIGH
Affirmative	can, could, may, might	Will, would, shall, should	Must, need, ought to, have/has to
Negative	can’t, oughtn’t, mayn’t	to, Won’t, shouldn’t	Couldn’t, needn’t

Table 3.9 Values of Modal Verbs in the Corpora

	Modal Verbs	CD	TOTAL	NYT	TOTAL	TG	TOTAL
Low	Can	67	115	50	162	28	135
	Could	16	(24.31%)	58	(45.00%)	69	(37.29%)
	May	23		32		22	
	Might	9		22		16	
Median	Will	166	321	86	171	91	204
	Would	68	(67.86%)	77	(47.50%)	95	(56.35%)
	Should	74		7		15	
	Is to	13		1		3	
High	Must	13	37	2	27	9	23
	Need	10	(7.83%)	10	(7.50%)	5	(6.36%)
	Have to	6		10		5	
	Cannot	7		2		2	
	Could not	1		3		2	
Total		473		360		362	

From table above, it's easy to find that no matter from which medium, median modal verbs such as "will", "would", "should" and "is to" are much preferred - 67.86% in *China Daily*, 47.50% in *The New York Times* and 56.35% in *The Guardian*. General speaking, CD uses modal verbs most, especially "will", while the percentage in TG and NYT is nearly the same, indicating that Chinese reports focus on impacts while western media pay more attention to specific incidents. The frequent use of median modal verbs in *China Daily* shows that China pays more attention to the outcomes that will occur and the influence of the trade conflicts. When it comes to "could", it is often used in NYT and TG but only used 16 times in CD self-built corpus.

Table 3.10 Examples of Modal Verbs in the Corpora

Media	N	Sentence
CD	1	Such a discriminatory practice is absolutely unacceptable, and the victimized countries will have no choice but to hit back to protect their interests.
	2	Any drastic actions that can overturn the boat will harm the interests of both sides.
	3	The US administration believes the additional tariffs on Chinese imports will help reduce its trade deficit with China.
	4	As... Wangyi said on Monday when he met with Pompeo, the misguided actions and hostile rhetoric of the US cast a shadow over China-US relations, which must not descend into conflict and confrontation.

	5	Thus it is shoring up confidence that the difficulties can be overcome by fighting against trade protectionism and unilateralism.	
NYT	6	Beijing hopes all of that will be enough to let President Trump declare victory and end the trade war between the two largest economies.	
	7	Midlevel trade talks this week in Beijing, which will continue into Wednesday, have been productive.	
	8	But companies that rely heavily on Chinese imports say that approach will destroy many of the American businesses the president has said he is trying to help.	
	9	On cars and soybeans, American negotiators can claim some measure of victory.	
	10	This trade war can end well only if China is honest about all the pillars of its formula for success and if Trump is honest about all of ours.	
	11	Economists have warned that the humming American economy could begin to slow if the United States engages in a protracted trade war with China.	
	12	If the trade war persists, China could make life even more difficult for American companies by adding to the web of non-tariff barriers (red tape, for example) or by supporting a consumer boycott.	
	13	Such deals could serve Mr. Trump's desire to reduce America's annual trade deficit with China.	
	14	The problems need to be addressed within the framework of global trade regime.	
	TG	15	He has used "protectionism" to imply that only he will safeguard Americans' livelihoods by fighting a trade war on their behalf.
		16	There will be great and fast economic retaliation against China if our farmers, ranchers and /or industrial workers are targeted.
		17	Unilateral moves will bring damage to all
		18	The world economy would take a hit to GDP of just over 1%, while there would be a smaller impact on the EU and the UK.
19		There are fears that Donald Trump's stance on trade could cause serious damage to the global economy.	
20		If that's the case there are a lot of global companies that could potentially hurt.	
21		In theory, it could serve as a useful model for the current China-US negotiations, if they were in similarly competent hands.	
22		Trump told Reuters that he could use his power as president to intervene in the case of Meng Wanzhou, the senior Huawei....	

Among examples taken from CD, "will" is mainly used to predict the future and express willingness. Example 1 and Example 2 use the simple present tense to describe the influence of potential drastic action such as other nations' retaliation or even self-damage. "Will" in Example 3 expresses the US government's willingness towards the levied tariff, hoping that it could depress China and low down the "trade deficit". "Must" is used 13 times in the corpus.

In Example 4, it is used to express China's solid stance towards the disputes and determination to prevent from the escalation of it. Low-level modal verb "can" in Example 5 is used to indicate that difficulties are possible to solve but there still has a long way to go.

In NYT, "will" is also used to express the willingness and predication such as in Example 6 and 7. Beijing hopes its measures can be effective and peace talk can be conducted. "Can" and "could" are chosen more frequently in this newspaper. "The trade can end well", "American negotiators can claim" both imply the low probability of the presupposition in Example 10 and 11. But in Example 12, reporter uses "could" to express China's influence for American companies, showing hidden attitude that actually they do not believe in it. "Such deals could" shows the greediness of Mr. Trump. The deals proposed could not satisfy him. "Need" is also preferred by NYT, demonstrating the necessity of solving problems from global trade.

In TG, in addition to the common use like Example 16 and 17, "will" is used to describe Trump, showing his attitude toward Americans and his confidence to his administration. "Would", more euphemistic than "will", is used more frequent, showing TG's preciseness of lexical choice, especially as the outsider of the Sino-US trade war. Besides, "could" is more euphemistic than "can", which is preferred to use in this medium. The frequency of "would" and "could" in some way shows British way of thinking -- seriousness.

Interpretation

News Sources

News resources refer to the organizations and individuals that provide news clues and background information to the public media and reporters, which determines the quality of news. In order to increase the credibility of reports, journalists usually extract quotes from authorities who have the similar political stances or attitudes with them. Therefore, through analyzing the news resources, the embedded ideologies can be dug out.

Table 3.11 Numbers of Different News Resources Used in Chosen News

<i>News</i>		<i>Specific</i>	<i>Semi-specific</i>	<i>Unspecific</i>	<i>Total</i>
CD	1	3	1	3	13
	2	3	0	1	
	3	0	0	2	
NYT	4	1	1	1	17
	5	8	2	0	
	6	3	1	0	
TG	7	5	0	0	25
	8	7	0	0	
	9	6	5	2	
<i>Total</i>		36	10	9	55
<i>Percentage</i>		65.45%	18.18%	16.37%	100%

The news resources can be sorted into three categories--specific news resource, semi-specific resource and unspecific resource. From the table above, it's easy to find that the number of specific news resources occupies most--65.45%. 18.18% are semi-specific resources while the unspecific resources take up 16.37%. Actually, the media prefer to choose the news or words from authorities to make the news more authentic and reliable. In order to expose the effects of different resources, detailed researches are conducted as follows.

Table 3.12 Examples of Specific Sources in Chosen News

<i>Examples</i>	
1	The White House on Tuesday issued a statement announcing that it was taking steps to protect domestic technology and intellectual property from what it called China's "discriminatory and burdensome trade practices". (News 1)
2	But as Chinese Ambassador to the World Trade Organization Zhang Xiangchen said on Monday at a WTO meeting, the Office of the United States Trade Representative has failed to produce "a single piece of evidence" (News 1)
3	The view within the Trump administration is, of course, that "trade wars are good, and easy to win." (News 4)
4	Lu Kang , a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, said in a daily news briefing. "It will bring disaster to multinational corporations, small and medium businesses and normal consumers across the world." (News 5)
5	"We buy imported goods because we feel they are safer to eat," said Mike Zheng , 30, who was browsing the aisles with his 2-year-old son. "If there were domestic substitutes, then tariffs would be O.K. But domestic products cannot keep up, so we'll just have to accept higher prices." (News 5)
6	"The driving force of the Chinese economy is mainly exports," Mr. Hua said. "If there are no exports, there will be manufacturing overcapacity. Manufacturing overcapacity will lead to debt. And debt will affect companies' balance sheets. Then it will be 2008 all over again." (News 5)
7	Xi said: "All countries should strive to improve their own business environment and solve their own problems. (News 8)

In Example 1, the reporter chooses to describe the event from the perspective of the White House, implying that it just represents America's views and has no relations with China. In America's eyes, their actions are a burden to China. Example 2 chooses to express the newspaper's view through the perspective of Chinese Ambassador to WTO to demonstrate that the news is professional and official. Apart from that, it also retells the opinion from the officer of the United States Trade Representative, shrinking off the responsibility. However, although Example 4, 5 and 6 use the specific resources to show the impartiality, it's obvious that reporters specially choose those who express the negative influence trade war brings to China -- the spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry and an economist at Fudan University represent those professors and Mike Zheng, the ordinary public, exaggerating the negative influence towards China. However, not all specific resources have hidden ideology such as Example 3 and 7, which just use the words from the presidents to show authority.

Table 3.13 Examples of Semi-specific Sources in Chosen News

Examples	
1	But whatever is being discussed on tariffs and intellectual property protection, few believe that the fragile ceasefire will lead to lasting harmony. (News 9)
2	“As the American side has gradually closed in on China, it has aroused the ire of Chinese society, and made Chinese people more clearheaded, more united,” said an editorial on the website of Global Times, a nationalist tabloid owned by the Communist Party. (News 5)
3	Yet the advent of Mr Trump should have been an opportunity for China as well as a danger. Instead, the turn against Beijing is not only due to “ death-by-China ” hawks.(News 10)

In example 1, the subject is not mentioned but reporter uses “few” to express the attitude of the public, shrinking from responsibility. Same method is also used in News 5. The writer does not mention the name of speaker but addresses his social position, avoiding the possibility of taking responsibility. When it comes to Example 3, the writer, organization and other information are not mentioned but actually the quotation is well-known to us. There is no need to gild the lily.

Therefore, reporters prefer to choose those authoritative statements to demonstrate their impartiality and use semi-specific or unspecific resources to shrink off the responsibility. Retelling the expressions is an effective way to realize the intention of countries or government they stand by the side of.

Reporting Modes

Fishman (1980) thinks that the quotation of news is “the fact that reporters take from other people’s statements.” Reporters collect words from other people and combine them into a passage which conceals his own thoughts. Different attitudes are shaped by different quotations. In addition to choosing different ways of speeches, different reporting verbs also express hidden attitudes.

Table 3.14 Distribution of Reporting Verbs Used in Corpus

Reporting Verbs		Corpus CD	Total	Corpus NTY	Total	Corpus TG	Total
<i>Neutral</i>	Say/said/saying	69	77	179	190	185	208
<i>Effect</i>	Report/reports/report ed	2	(70%)	3	(89.62%)	2	(87.40%)
	asked	1		3		2	
	told	4		5		16	
	Pointed out	1		0		3	
<i>Positive Effect</i>	Stress/ stressed	3	28	0	20	2	26
	Add/added	2	(25.45%)	12	(9.43%)	12	(10.92%)
	Noted/noting	1)	0		1	
	Indicate/ indicates	5		1		3	

	Believe/ believes	17		7		8	
Negative Effect	cautioned	1	5	1	2	3	4
	Argue/ argues/ argued	4	(4.55%)	1	(0.95%)	1	(1.68%)
Total		110		212		238	

In the news reporting, reporters also choose different reporting verbs to describe the action of participators. The verbs above are frequently used including “say”, “report”, “ask”, “tell” etc., which can be divided into three categories: neutral, positive and negative. From the chat above, it’s obvious that all three media like to use neutral effect verbs but those words with negative effects such as “argue” and “caution” are also used. Take the sentence from the News 6 -- His administration argues that these decisions are meant to force President Xi Jinping of China to begin to play by the rules other major economies follow -- for example. “Argue” is used to portray America a barbarous image. Therefore, with the assistant of reporting verbs, reporters are more easily to control what they want to express while at the same time, readers can also easily get the point that reporters want to express. Besides, *China Daily* also likes to use the verb “argue”, which is to describe America, implying China’s blame to the trade conflicts imposed by China.

Explanation

Institutional Context

China Daily and *The New York Times* are two most representative newspapers in China and America respectively. The passages on them convey the value and the political stances of their own countries in some way. *China Daily*, the state-run media, is the only newspaper used in English in China, regarded as a spokesman of Chinese government. *The New York Times* is a famous newspaper at home and abroad. It also serves for its country and it is also a propagator of American government in some way.

The Guardian was first founded in 1982. Nowadays, it has developed into a representative of serious, reliable and independent news agency of Britain. However, at the backdrop of capitalism, the so-called “independent” could not escape from the control of government and capital. It’s not difficult to find that their reports also hide their own ideologies.

When it comes to the problems associated with China, western media always cover it with stereotype, belittling it and satirizing it. However, with China’s fast development, further study needs to be conducted to figure out whether there is a change among western media.

Social Context

As the example mentioned by Wang Peng (2019) -- Chinese media chooses “confident” to describe its political system, theory and culture while the western media take “assertive”-- China has always been the “imaginary enemy” in westerners’ eyes. The main western media are vigilant at China’s fast-pace development. However, their irony and satire can be understood as some kind of fear that China will surpass them one day in some extent. Besides, since Trump’s administration begins, the frictions between two countries have escalated. He pushes unilateralism and economy hegemony worldwide with a slogan “America First” and accuses China of trade surplus, technological transformation etc. The purpose of all these fabricated accusations is to contain the development of China.

Summary

From description perspective, it’s found that all countries pay attention to the participants of the trade war but express their different political stances though different expressions after studying lexical choice, transitivity and

modality. China focuses on problem solving, using “sides”, “talks”, “relations” and the like, portraying a responsible image for China -- never fearing the provocations from other countries and having enough confidence to fight back through describing different process of participants. At the same time, it also uses “pressure” and “forcing”, describing China as a victim. *The New York Times* always takes phrases like “economic domination” and “wiggled out of commitments” to add some hegemonic color to China, fearing of China’s fast development. However, American media does not always agree with Trump and sometimes portrays him negatively by the words “pride himself”, “boost” etc., while *The Guardian* does not show its stance or impartiality through choice of words although describing two countries by using words with negative colors.

From interpretation perspective, three media all prefer to use specific resources to demonstrate their impartiality and fairness. But through studying in details, it is easy to discover that the people and words chosen have great differences. China often abstracts speeches from authorities and leaders to establish China’s attitudes while America chooses words from people who are in line with interests of theirs.

When it comes to explanation, the analysis can be delivered from the perspective of society and culture. As *China Daily* is the state-run media, it always shows positive aspect of China and functions like a tool to assist the government. But America is a place where freedom of speech is highly thought of. The media there can show their own voices bravely, which is also the reason why President Trump is even satirized in chosen samples. *The Guardian*, as an outsider, has the right to express their opinion, adding personal color to the reports but its hostility has reduced gradually with China’s raising international status.

Conclusion

Taking Fairclough’s three-dimensional model as theoretical framework and Halliday’s SFG as analytical theoretical, this research chooses China-US trade disputes-based news reports from *China Daily*, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* as data analysis and conducts critical discourse analysis from three perspectives: description, interpretation and explanation. The major findings are listed as follows.

(1) China, America and Britain hold different political stances. Although all media put “impartiality” as their golden rule, seldom can really achieve it. *China Daily* has always represented Chinese government's position. When conducting relevant reports, it emphasizes bilateral consultations and peacefully resolves frictions, and creates a positive and responsible image of a big country, and implies that Chinese were the victims of the incident; *The New York Times* does not always support US government, especially President Trump. It even uses negative adjectives and verbs to satirize him. As a third party in Sino-US trade frictions, British mainstream medium, *The Guardian*, adopts a neutral attitude in most cases, but some of its reports make negative comments to China and the United States both.

(2) Through lexical choices, selected descriptive processes, intended quotations and different news resources, different ideologies can be embedded in the reports. As mentioned above, *China Daily* often uses positive words when describing itself and addresses its attitude -- solving problems through peaceful negotiation while when *The New York Times* describes Trump, “boast” and “pride himself” are adopted to satirize him. Besides, the reports from three countries all choose the quotations from the authorities to demonstrate their fairness but sometimes they omit the whole expressions to achieve their own purpose.

In conclusion, due to great differences on political systems and ideologies, different countries have their own standpoints even to the same event. The hidden ideology in news reports influence people’s thoughts and values unconsciously. Through critical discourse analysis, the public can be helped to improve their critical thinking and sensitivity to news reports, and not to be the stupid crowd. This thesis provides a research method combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives simultaneously, highly supplementing to the existing researches,

especially to those involving economic matters. Besides, it also represents a reference for journalists to select most suitable words when reporting a similar or same topic and raises their awareness to lexical choice.

However, although the previous study figures out several characters between three media, there still exists some limitations. Firstly, the quantity of research data is limited, which makes the conclusion less persuasive. The self-built corpora couldn't present all characters of three mainstream media and these three media couldn't generalize all reports from each country. Secondly, the quality is not guaranteed as personal judgement of the writer can't be avoided in sample election and analysis, resulting in subjectivity in some extent. More large-scale research is needed to conduct a comprehensive analysis towards the media.

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