
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Stances: Comparing Engagement of Chinese and American Mental Health News Discourse

Yan Jiaying

College of Foreign Studies, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

Corresponding Author: Yan Jiaying, **E-mail:** elita_atwork@163.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates mental health news discourse in Chinese (China Daily) and American (The New York Times) mental health news discourse with an engagement framework (Martin & White, 2005), examining how news writers utilize engagement resources to convey value positions on mental health issues. The results show that both corpora prefer heterogloss to monogloss, indicating a common practice in acknowledging multiple voices. In dialogic strategies, American media use monogloss significantly more than Chinese media do, indicating a more categorical and assertive baseline. Within heterogloss, Chinese media is expansion-dominant, with typical endorsement and entertaining resources; the American counterpart favors contraction, especially with deny and acknowledgement utterances. These dialogic patterns indicate that the Chinese media foreground mediated, evidential, and collective guidance on mental health issues, while the American news discourse emphasizes assertive, contestatory authority and experiential advocacy. These findings suggest that Chinese reporting would treat mental health as a collective public project, and American news frames it as an individual issue requiring social advocacy.

KEYWORDS

Engagement system; mental health; news discourse; corpus

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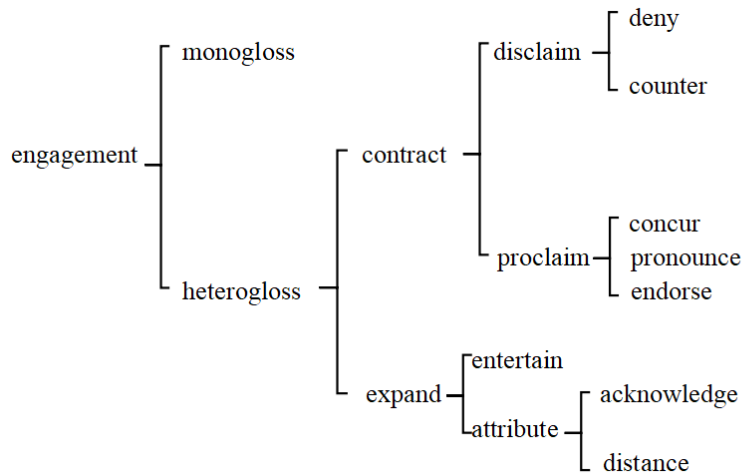
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1. Introduction

Mental health issues have been drawing attention from society, and more and more people are starting to care about psychological problems. The way people discuss things, mental health, for example, can shape or influence how they perceive such issues. Thus, mental health discourse may serve to affect how people perceive mental issues, especially in social media, official texts, or newspapers. Previous studies have explored what attitudes people have towards mental issues (Yu et al, 2021), exhibiting a rising and positive concern and social support about mental health problems.

The appraisal system is an extension of the interpersonal function within Systemic Functional Linguistics, which provides a systematic framework for analyzing language and texts, enabling authors to express views and propositions while interacting with readers/ anticipated responses (Geng et al. 2024). This evaluation can be three-fold: attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin & White, 2005), in which the first aspect has given rise to wide exploration, while the other two remain with little exploration. The engagement subdivision of the system is especially related to stance-taking, investigating the rhetorical effects that arise from the diverse positioning and the consequences of selecting one position over another (Martin & White, 2005). It can be divided into two primary groups: dialogic expansion and dialogic contraction. Dialogic expansion creates an environment where diverse voices and perspectives are included, enabling various viewpoints to exist. This further encompasses types such as entertain, typically embodied by modal verbs and adjuncts, and attribute, such as "X suggests that...". Conversely, dialogic contraction restricts the range for other voices by constricting different alternatives or directly rejecting them. This method highlights the author's expertise or conviction (detailed structure is presented in Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Engagement System (Martin & White, 2005, p. 134)



Discourse analysis concerning engagement can contribute to inspect how the speaker/ writer spreads their view to the public, and how they treat other various perspectives. Based on this, this study aims to explore how public media construct the stances and value positions in mental health news discourse (MHND hereafter) with the aid of linguistic corpus tools, and attempts to give some hints to the following questions:

- (1) What is the distribution of engagement resources in Chinese and American MNHD?
- (2) What are the engagement patterns employed to show stances in the corpora?
- (3) How is the value position realized through the engagement resources in Chinese and American media?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Appraisal Engagement

The engagement framework within appraisal system focuses on intersubjective positioning in stance-taking, which is rooted in Bakhtin's (1981) notion "dialogism", and mainly developed by Martin & White (2005) and forming a systematic guiding framework. Later development pays attention to how texts expand or contract dialogic space for alternative views and positions (White, 2020). With this system, the evaluative meaning derives from the variability in the dialogistic positioning that the speaker/writer adopts vis-a-vis prior utterances on the current topic or potential responses to the current utterance (Tavassoli et al. 2019).

The engagement system is widely applied to discourse types where authority, credibility and stance negotiation are prominent, for instances, academic writing and news reporting. Academic discourse is the major exploring field concerning engagement strategies, where engagement is treated as collective scholarly argumentation. Previous studies examine how academic writers devote commitment through engagement markers (Fryer, 2022), such as negation (Sun & Crosthwaite, 2022) and reporting verbs (Liardét & Black, 2019), and how they combine engagement resources in co-articulation patterns (Miller et al., 2014). In news reporting, it has been used to explain how reports presume putative readers and manage opposing viewpoints (Tavassoli et al. 2019), including cross-cultural contrasts in reliance on categorical assertions and heteroglossic negotiations (Liu & Xu, 2018), as well as how the patterned alignment strategies are employed in policy, sports and diplomatic news texts (Esmaili & Abdollahzadeh, 2024; Li & Zhang, 2023; Sun & Crosthwaite, 2022). The engagement system has proven effective in exploring stance management strategies and revealing the writer's intent to shape both readership and the reader-writer community.

2.2 Mental Health Discourse

Mental health discourse has gained wide attention in the field of linguistics. Recent studies have primarily focused on three main academic paradigms: discourse analysis, metaphor, and the corpus-assisted approach. Discourse analysis is widely used to explore psychological representations from societal, gender, and cultural perspectives (Lakeman & Hurley, 2021; Day, 2023; Efird

et al., 2023; Ramsay, 2023; Huang, 2024; Martinez-Mendia et al., 2024; Murugaiah et al, 2024). For example, texts in social media discourse concerning two public mental health campaigns in Hong Kong were analyzed to examine how officials and local organizations used language to raise awareness (Huang, 2024). The study found that social organizations often avoid direct references to mental illness, instead focusing on daily attitudes, emotions, and social relationships. Similarly, Murugaiah et al. (2024) combined the theory of semantic macrostructures and the ideological square model to analyze news reports, identifying several topics centered around dangerousness, vulnerability, and human rights of the patients.

Metaphor analysis is another key approach. Understanding the metaphorical language frequently employed by patients can enhance comprehension and enable more effective responses from healthcare professionals and social communicators (Semino et al, 2017; Hommerberg et al., 2020; Coll-Florit & Roca, 2022). Studies attempt to explore the relationship between metaphor use in discourse and its influence on people with mental illness. Metaphors of battle, journey, imprisonment, and burden are prevalent in how individuals with severe mental disorders express their experiences (Coll-Florit & Roca, 2022). Metaphorical expressions in daily communication can foster supportive and less stigmatizing interactions, thereby shaping positive emotional responses toward individuals with mental disorders (Reali et al., 2015; Pavlova & Berkers, 2020).

Corpus-assisted analysis has been used to examine the social attitude and communicative contents towards mental health issues. Studies indicate a rise in positive emotional portrayals in news and social media over time (Mohd Nor et al, 2021; Yu et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2024). For instance, Ma et al. (2022) investigate mental health issues among Chinese international students in the U.S., finding that factors like face concern and language discrimination exacerbated mental health problems, while English proficiency increased help-seeking intentions.

Current research highlights the importance of language in shaping societal attitudes, patient experiences, and professional responses. The appraisal system has been applied to examine various genres, such as academic and media discourse. For example, Jiang & Wang (2017) compare the distinction of engagement resources at different steps of news discourse, indicating that the dialogic space constructed shows a rhythmic pattern of expansion and contraction with the variation of engagement strategies. However, while attitudinal aspects of mental health discourse have been extensively studied, engagement resources remain underexplored. This study examines mental health discourse in both Chinese and American mainstream news publications, focusing on engagement resources to explore how different public media construct stances and value positions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis to examine MHND. The texts in the corpus were compiled from the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* sections of the database LexisNexis using keywords such as "mental health", "depression", "mental illness", covering the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2023. Specifically, to ensure the overall comparability of each corpus, 28 pieces of Chinese news texts and 13 pieces of American ones were randomly selected and then manually screened with no duplicates, all mental-health related, and excluded from editorials and letters to the editor.

After selection, the corpus was manually cleansed and denoised to ensure data quality. This process involved removing HTML tags, irrelevant elements such as page headers, footers, and special characters. Finally, the Chinese corpus comprises 14,465, and the American corpus of 14,479 was established, and imported to the corpus annotation tool UAM 3.3x, an SFL-specific annotation tool, to label the engagement resource of each sentence, and the software could generate the statistical data for every category of engagement resource.

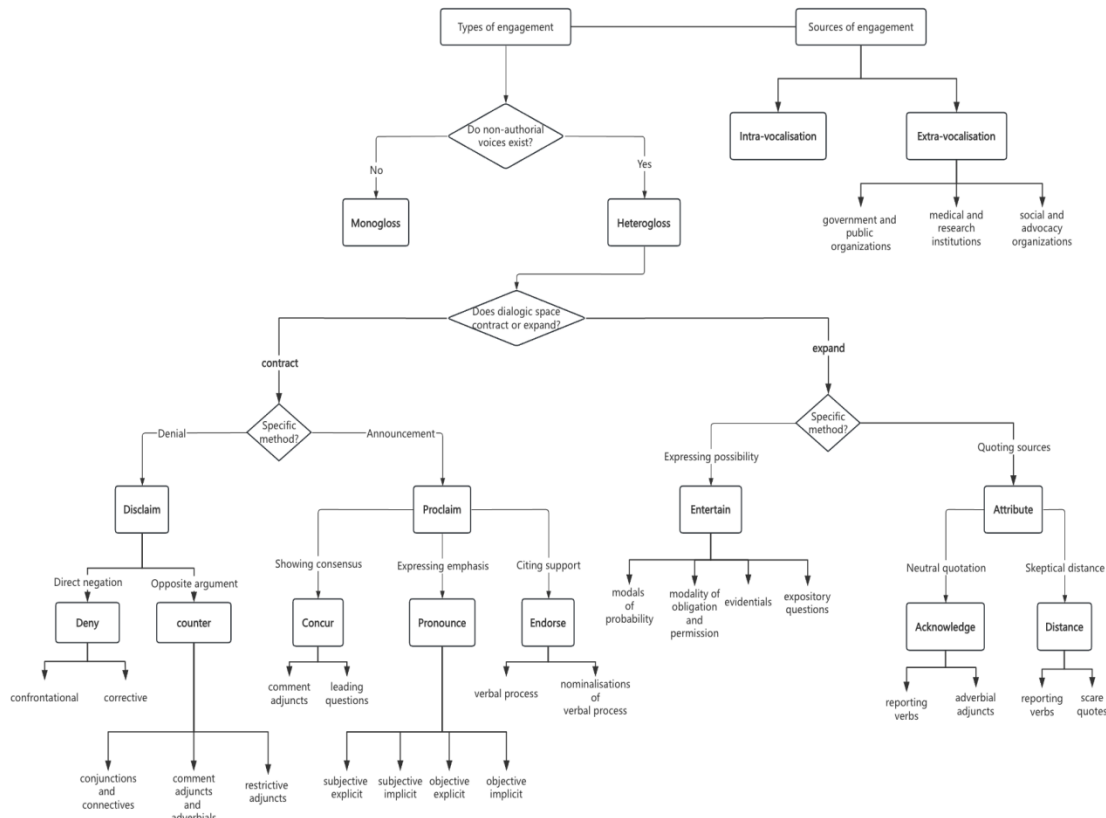
3.2 Data Annotation

The annotation was undergone based on a specified appraisal engagement framework, which outlines the fundamental lexicogrammatical realizations mentioned in the seminal work of Martin & White (2005) as well as their subsequent illustrations (shown in Figure 2). Besides, considering the importance of sourcing of propositions, the framework includes White's (2012) division between "intra-vocalisation" and "extra-vocalisation", where the former only foregrounds authorial voice while the latter includes external voices of different groups. A pilot study is also conducted to categorize the main types of external sources included in the corpus based on their different functions: government and public organizations, medical and research institutions, and social and advocacy organizations.

This detailed framework should increase the accuracy and credibility of the annotation. Moreover, the study divides the annotation periods into three stages: first, the two corpora were separated into three sections of similar length, labeled as CD 1, CD 2, and CD 3, and NYT 1, NYT 2, and NYT 3. Secondly, when annotated, these excerpts were annotated strictly following the framework and with one excerpt each time, but without a second investigation of re-examination. A deliberate interval of 15

days was set to facilitate cognitive decoupling, so as to reduce the influence of short-term, context-dependent decisions and shift the annotator's focus back to the abstract, rule-based guidelines. Third, after the cooling-off period, a randomly selected excerpt was re-annotated from scratch according to the framework. Once the discrepancy between the two annotations occurred, a second professional who experts in the appraisal system was consulted to reach a consensus in deciding the final identification. Finally, all the annotations were assured of consistency among the annotation stages.

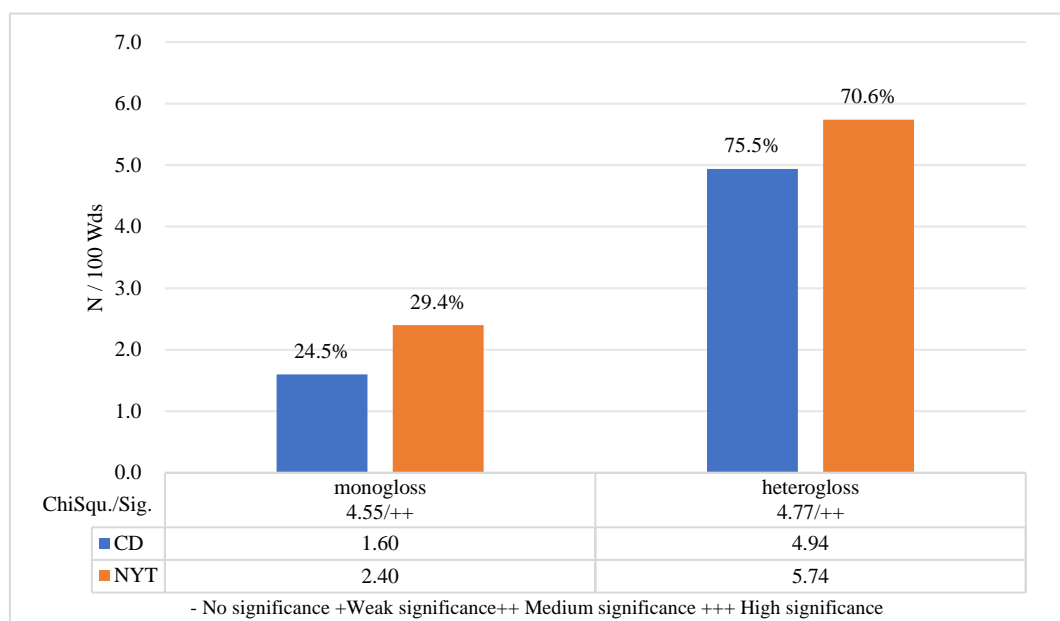
Figure 2. An Adapted Analytical Framework for MHND



4. Results and Findings

The frequencies of engagement resources were calculated using the UAM Corpus Tool, and significant differences were also presented using the Chi-Square Test outcome with p-value within UAM. For facilitating comparison, the frequencies of each engagement category presented in the following figures and tables have been normalized to 100 words.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of monogloss and heterogloss in the two corpora. It is clear that both Chinese and American corpora prefer using heterogloss than monogloss, suggesting an overall multiple dialogic management in different voices and positions. NYT possesses a significantly higher employment of both monogloss and heterogloss, indicating that the American corpus includes a more diversified position management strategy in aligning with potential readers. However, as suggested by the distribution of the percentage of two categories in the corpora, the inclination to use heteroglossic utterances is higher in CD than in NYT (75.5% vs 70.6%), indicating that when it comes to engagement, CD is more reliant on heterogloss than NYT is. Correspondingly, NYT has a preference for monoglossic utterances, and the difference is significant as shown by the chi-square test results. This difference suggests that the dialogic space of Chinese media might be more open to alternative views and perspectives, while American media would be more self-reliant and exclusive when it comes to mental health issues at the social level.

Figure 3. Differences in the Use of Monogloss and Heterogloss

4.1 Monogloss

Monogloss, which elucidates propositions solely through the authorial voice, typically excludes the interaction between the author and the audience. News discourse is always considered objective and authoritative, and thus expressing opinions in a firm proposition is indispensable. From an overall inspection, monogloss presents medium significance between CD and NYT, which indicates that such categorical assertions and authorial voices are more valued in NYT than in CD (CD 24.5% versus NYT 29.4%). Therefore, the discourse shows a higher assertive tone in the NYT in introducing common and shared values in the reader-writer community. Moreover, monogloss is also used to state social situations about mental health issues and firm attitudes to deal with them. For example:

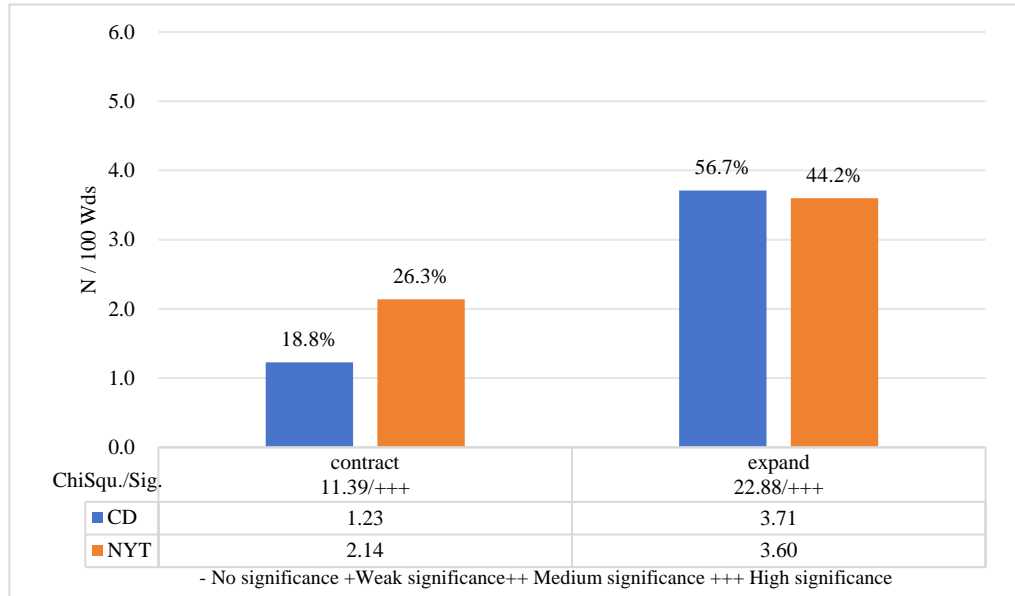
- 1) The education ministry has listed 20 major tasks regarding the issue, including establishing a platform to monitor student's mental health. (CD-1)
- 2) Facing heavy academic pressure, high parental expectations and heated peer competition, a growing number of Chinese students are bothered with various mental problems, which has raised an alarm. (CD-3)
- 3) The migrant crisis is a looming mental health crisis. (NYT- 6)
- 4) Once released, some of the patients have spent months on the wait-lists for assignment to specialized treatment teams. (NYT-12)

These examples demonstrate the current situation of national mental health issues as well as the established policies and measures that have been implemented in the country. This taken-for-grantedness has strong leading effects that construct a reader-writer relationship with shared value position (Martin & White, 2005), and therefore it would be considered common and widely accepted that mental health issues are prevalent in both countries, and it is the countries' responsibility to impose corresponding measures to address this problem. What is contrastive between the two corpora is that CD relates monogloss with professionals and experts, while NYT constructs connections of individual experiences who might be suffering mental health problems. These categorical assertions properly lay a basic tone of the Chinese media's overall engagement from the perspective of professionalism in establishing assumptions, whereas the American media attempts to invoke interpersonal resonance using personal experiences of mental health.

4.2 Heterogloss

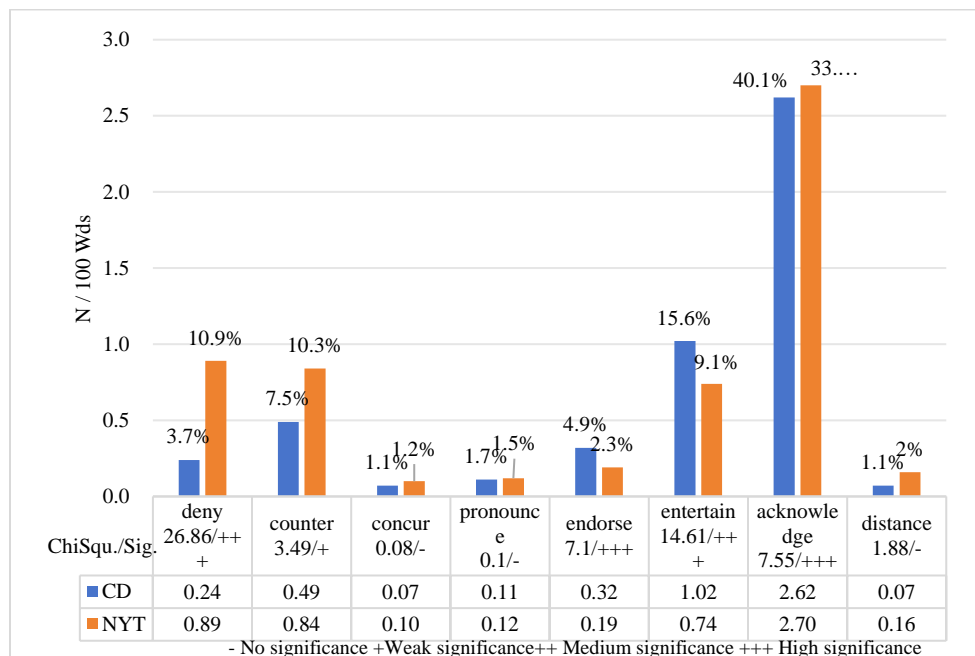
Heterogloss functions as an indispensable strategy in news discourse in presenting alternative viewpoints and building a multi-dialogue space, as well as showing an objective appearance of news reporting. In comparison, NYT uses more heteroglossic resources than CD, which suggests that American media would address multiple views and perspectives more actively, while CD presents less needed inclination in dealing with other viewpoints. Differences are also present significantly in the two sub-categories of heterogloss, dialogic contract, and expand, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Differences in the Use of Contract and Expand



Although NYT outnumbers CD in both contract and expand resources, CD features more in expansive resources while NYT has more in contractive ones, which is reflected in the proportions of each category within the corpus. For contract, NYT constitutes 26.3% of the engagement resources while CD covers only 18.8%; for expand, CD accounts for over a half with 56.7%, whereas NYT takes up 44.2%. The statistical significance further indicates that it is the NYT that employs more often contraction to control the range of values, while CD prefers introducing possibilities and attributions to open up more voices. In specific sub-categories, as is presented in Figure 5, deny, endorse, entertain, and acknowledge show highly significant differences. Within dialogic contraction, NYT prefers the disclaim type, especially the deny category, which directly rejects alternative views and presupposes putative readers as uncommitted or disaligned and therefore needs to be corrected in this reader-writer community. Rather, CD prefers endorsement more significantly than NYT, indicating that Chinese media would resort to external warrantable voices in demonstrating authorial credibility indirectly. Within dialogic expansion, CD shows more preference in entertain to indicate different possibilities, while NYT significantly uses more acknowledge resources to introduce diverse alternative positions.

Figure 5. Differences in the Use of Contract and Expand Sub-categories



4.2.1 Dialogic Contract

5) As is presented in the above figure, denial and endorsement strategies exhibit significant differences between CD and NYT. Dialogic contractive resources refuse, or at least challenge alternative viewpoints, so as to narrow dialogic space. For deny resources, common keywords are similar in the two corpora, including "not", "no", and "without". In this way, the author shows direct opposition to certain presuppositions that putative readers may hold in the first place, and negates these presuppositions to achieve position adjustment. In such rejection, CD mainly focuses on the redirection of mental health issues' focus in explaining and advocating, such as the destigmatization of mental problems and the importance of proper mental health services in society. By contrast, NYT usually uses such negation in the propositions that concern major limitations of current mental health implementations, as well as relates to other fields, particularly sports with mental health problems. For example:

6) It's important to remember that mental health struggles are **not** a sign of weakness. (CD-2)

7) But a mental health officer was still **not** dispatched to the scene. (NYT- 3)

The counter resources also show slightly significant differences between the two corpora, and NYT uses more of these counter-expected strategies, especially together with the deny resources, as is shown in Example 6. The co-articulation of counter resources "but", "still", and denial "not" constructs an intensive rejecting discourse tone. In Example 6, the author presupposes a situation that readers might have expected an officer's appearance in the issue of police officers shooting a girl with a mental health problem, and breaks this expectation to achieve reader knowledge alignment. Such an engagement pattern serves to construct a strong argumentative and critical position alignment and thereby controls the reader's value borders. In terms of reader alignment, this co-articulation mainly performs a disalignment function that potentially promotes intended readers and, at the same time, corrects the mistaken propositions brought about by some other reasons, such as lack of thorough or comprehensive comprehension or analysis (Zolfaghari, 2023). This also identifies the writer himself as a "knower" identity (Edy et al., 2025) and therefore conveys this "truer" information to the public.

Endorsement in the proclaim type favors "borrowing" external voices to challenge, fend off, or exclude alternative views, and CD would prefer this strategy far more than NYT does. In CD, typical realizations of endorsement include reporting verbs such as "find", "suggest", and "indicate", while in NYT, the keyword of the endorse type is mainly "find", as in the following examples:

8) Based on more than six years of observation and surveys, her previous research **found** that if there is excessive exposure in someone's infancy and early childhood, even if the screen exposure decreases later... (CD-9)

9) From March 2022 to August 2022, mental health visits increased by 39 percent, and spending increased by 54 percent, the study found. (NYT-1)

In both of the cases, researchers have been proposed to suggest different aspects of focus of mental health issues: for CD in Example 7, the author concentrates on the cause of mental problems, and for NYT in Example 8, it is the current situation that primarily falls into the major focus. This suggests that the Chinese media would presume putative readers as mistakenly concentrating on peripheral aspects of mental problems, such as social bias, as indicated in its monoglossic utterances, and, in fact, for this, it is necessary for the media to redirect the actual cause of formation and therefore treat this as a serious social problem. In comparison, the NYT employs this strategy in exhibiting useful evidence in suggesting the seriousness of mental problems for the whole society, often combining it with specific figures and data to show intuitive results.

Moreover, in endorsement, the agent of the proposition in CD often concerns itself with children, parents, and school teachers, which means that the media considers children play a large part in mental health issues, and it is essential to constrain and clarify the right cognition towards this aspect using external authoritative voices. Therefore, endorse resources in CD works in a clear and guided way in leading readers' cognition to achieve reader alignment.

The different use of disclaim resources in CD and NYT suggests that when it comes to narrowing down dialogic space and steering reader values and positions, Chinese media would tend to emphasize and guide viewpoints from external authoritative voices, and therefore lead them to pay more attention to the real focus of mental health. This way, it would be easier for the writer to accept that reasonable and warrantable knowledge, therefore constructing the discourse more evidential and "expert-like (Kapranov, 2024; Liardét & Black, 2019)" in increasing its credibility and realizing the purpose of aligning readers to the media side. By contrast, NYT prefers employing direct and straight negation, together with other engagement resources such as counter, to build a strong argumentative force and rectify information concerning real social mental health cases. Mostly, these resources combined indicate a disalignment between the writer and readers; the writer employs these strong arguments to validate the current propositions and consolidate or enlarge readership.

4.2.2 Dialogic Expand

Dialogic expansive resources account for most of the proportion in both Chinese and American corpora, as presented in Figures 4 and 5. The employment of attribution and entertaining constitutes a large part of the essence of news journalism in

compiling a multiplicity of views and positions from different sources, and it is the media that decide with these engagement resources how to address these voices and finally achieve the purpose of reader alignment. As shown in Figure 5, the entertaining and acknowledge types present significant differences between the two corpora. Entertaining resources are mostly used to introduce possibilities or alternative viewpoints that derive from the writer himself, and comparatively, acknowledgement cites external voices but shows no clear inclination to shoulder proposition responsibilities, as endorsement type does in heteroglossic contraction, only to indicate neutral quotation.

For entertaining resources, CD employs many more of these than NYT to perform the probability and inferences, as well as the implications of future mental health directions. Typical realizations include modality of obligation "should", modal verbs "can/could", "may/might" to indicate probability, and attributes like "it is estimated/necessary that", etc. But in the NYT, most of the entertaining utterances express uncertainty through modal probabilities "can/could", "would", and modal attributes "likely". For example:

10) Governments and healthcare systems **should** allocate sufficient funding to mental health services, ensuring the availability of trained professionals and adequate infrastructure. (CD-2)

11) Furthermore, promoting open conversations about mental health in schools, workplaces and communities **can** help normalize discussions and encourage individuals to seek the support they require. (CD-2)

12) He acknowledged that there **could** be more members in the Mental Health Unit, but, he said, the responses of those officers has been adequate. (NYT-3)

For CD, the entertaining resources are primarily used to suggest viable and possible measure and actions that might come into effect to deal with mental problems, as indicated in the Example 9 and 10. This suggests that the media is conveying a promising and nation-focused management in future mental health problems. This entertaining consider putative addressees as open and likeminded in accepting the advanced propositions since not much authorial or external forces are constructed. For NYT, on the other hand, such entertain utterances are describing how the current events might going forward and therefore exerts development dynamics, as shown in Example 11. The modal verbs convey the meaning of conjecture and uncertainty, and together with the acknowledge markers "acknowledge" and said", the authorial engagement is further reduces and thereby uncertainty of the advanced proposition is further enhanced. Such uncertainty of propositions might explain the much less employment of entertaining resources in NYT than in CD, which is to decrease those discredited information and to avoid the shrink of textual authoritativeness.

For acknowledgement, although being the most frequently used engagement subtype in both corpora, it still exhibits divergent engagement strategies in Chinese and American media. By expanding the dialogic space with acknowledgement, news texts not only inform readers but also contribute to the broader societal conversation about mental health, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive public discourse (Mordecai, 2023). In CD, typical realizations of acknowledge resources include verbal process said", "suggest" and adverbial adjunct "according to", and the most related external sources would be medical personnel, institutions, universities and the like. In contrast, in NYT, keywords of acknowledgement consist of "said" and "according to", mostly from the voice of social individuals and advocacy organizations. For instance:

13) The Cyberspace Administration of China **said** more effort will be focused on online guidance for teenagers' mental health. (CD-1)

14) **According to** a report based on a survey of almost 80,000 students aged 15 to 26 released in March by the Institute of Psychology of Chinese Academy of Sciences, 21,48 percent of the respondents suffered from depression and 45,28 percent of the respondents said they had to cope with anxiety. (CD-11)

15) "Everyone needs to feel good about themselves and what they're doing," Stephens **said**. "If she doesn't feel safe, then she doesn't need to be there. That's the end of that." (NYT-11)

16) Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, **according to** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, especially for adolescents and people aged 25 to 34. (NYT-13)

As the most frequently used type of engagement resource in MHND, acknowledgement shapes the source of authority to a large extent and fastens on the public's awareness of information credibility. The inclusion of these external voices in CD introduces mental situations among different people, especially those of students and teenagers, and also the influence that would be made by schools, family, and social institutions. This may be grounded in the collective social reality in China, which values the development of children, as well as their education, level of livelihood, and the strong belief and credibility in the public healthcare system. By this ground, the discourse is constructed as a socially bonded network where medical workers and experts function as the leading force, and the public would be the supporting power.

On the contrary, for NYT, the source of information mainly comes from social and public figures and organizations, relating mental health problems not only as patients but also with people from different parts of society, such as sportsmen, shop owners, social influencers, and so on. The writer would portray putative readers as more resonating to such personal narrations

concerning mental health issues, and invoking interpersonal psychological connections. This frame of experiential resonance works to involve everyone in and, therefore, evokes the public's awareness of confronting mental health problems. Moreover, the chi-square test between the corpora suggests a significantly larger number of acknowledge resources used in NYT than in CD, indicating that NYT's inclination in constructing such a domestic and widely sourced discourse is a must, and the discourse chooses to connect more closely with putative readers, demonstrating involvement in a larger and continuing discourse common community.

4.3 Major Findings

The results above present both quantitative and qualitative divergence in the employment of engagement resources between the Chinese and American media discourses on mental health. The core contrast lies in the dialogic management, i.e., NYT markedly prefers monogloss and heterogloss-contract, while CD is highly covered by heterogloss-expand in managing both authorial and external voices.

American media establishes a crucial baseline for interpretation with a rhetoric of categorical assertion, frames mental health issues as personalized, experiential narratives, and at the same time presents direct argumentativeness using disclaim-deny strategies, constructing an adversarial public sphere. Together with the external resort to social and advocacy organizations, credibility is established through real-life experiences and social advocacy, shaping mental health as a personal struggle and a social justice cause. In this way, the putative readers would be considered as more uncommitted in realizing the reality of social mental health progress, and sometimes as holding varied or mistaken beliefs. It employs strategic disalignment followed by corrective realignment, building a more volatile, debate-driven relationship where authority is performatively established through critique and personal resonance. This reflects a social reality that centers on individualistic critique and public-based accountability, which incorporates personal narrative into social constitutions and aligns readers as a part of a critical assessment to be made together.

In contrast, Chinese media employ mostly acknowledge, entertain, and proclaim-endorse strategies to create a discourse that is evidential, collective, and mediate authoritativeness. It would be more reliant on medical and research institutions for its arguments and reflect a societal contrast in healthcare expertise, thereby framing mental health as a public health issue managed through policy. This approach presupposes a readership that is embracing of guided consensus, which seeks alignment by inviting readers into a shared, expert-informed project of social improvement. Such a pattern mirrors a social value position that emphasizes collectivist governance and expert-guided social harmony, which positions mental health as a matter of public welfare and aligns readers as participants in a collective project.

4. Conclusion

The study has undertaken a comparative analysis of engagement resources used in Chinese (*China Daily*) and American (*The New York Times*) mental health news discourse with the appraisal engagement framework (Martin & White, 2005). The results show that both corpora employ more heterogloss than monogloss, confirming that the discourse inherently acknowledge multiple voices, but their dialogic strategies are opposed. American media use a significantly higher proportion of monogloss, establishing a baseline of more categorical and assertive statements. Within heterogloss, the Chinese corpus is expansion-dominant, while the American counterpart is contraction dominant. Specifically, the Chinese corpus is in greater use of endorse and entertain, and the American corpus is in deny and acknowledge resources.

The engagement preference in the two reflects two divergent dialogic patterns in managing multiple positions. The Chinese corpus constructs a stance of mediated, evidential, and collective guidance, whereas in NYT, it constructs a stance of assertive, contestatory authority with experiential advocacy. These patterns also reflect deeper social and cultural differences concerning the topic of mental health. Chinese media incorporate mental health as a collective project with expert guidance and public participation; otherwise, American media shape mental issues as an individual cause, which necessitates socially advocated voices. This study highlights the necessity of analyzing different discourses through the lens of engagement as an integrated system, especially counting in monogloss and the source categorization to fully understand the role that the media play in projecting cultural and social realities.

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APPENDIX: News texts included in the corpus

China Daily

1. Efforts called for on students' mental health
2. Challenges in addressing mental health
3. Chongqing to increase mental health facilities
4. Asian Americans face stigma on mental health: Report
5. Mental health market is evolving, potentially big
6. Vice-minister details progress in mental health services
7. Efforts called for on students' mental health
8. Committee calls for action on adolescents' mental health
9. Electronic devices risk mental health of kids
10. School and community facilities help to promote kids' mental health
11. More efforts to safeguard mental health
12. Youths' mental health services to be improved
13. A mental healing program with coffee, music
14. Changing minds on mental health
15. Nation's mental health better than expected in 2022
16. More efforts unveiled to help safeguard mental health of young people
17. China aims to increase mental health facilities in schools by 2025
18. Improving mental health amid pandemic
19. Building an integrated mental health service system for university students: CPPCC member
20. Project addresses adolescent mental health issues

21. Students' mental health safeguarded
22. Mental health concerns on rise
23. Experts urge focus on adolescent mental health
24. Experts call for increased mental health funding
25. Focusing on youth mental health and protecting children's growth
26. Changing minds on mental health
27. US surgeon general warns of youth mental health crisis
28. Survey finds more US teens have mental health issues

The New York Times

1. Mental Health Spending Surged During Pandemic
2. Peace Corps Sued Over Mental Health Policy
3. When Mental Health Crisis Ends in a Police Shooting
4. Rosalynn Carter Lauded for Humanitarian Work, Mental Health Advocacy
5. Intensified Focus on Adolescent Mental Health
6. To Heal, Migrant Children Need Mental Health Services
7. Osaka Discusses Mental Health and Her Plans to Return
8. Expanding Care For Mental Health
9. Harvard Scours TikTok For Mental Health Allies
10. Maine Gunman Disclosed He Had Mental Health Issues, Gun Shop Owner Says
11. Sabalenka Skips French Open News Conference Citing Her Mental Health
12. Proposal in Manhattan Would Expand Mental Health Services for the Homeless
13. New 988 Mental Health Crisis Hotline Sees Record Demand